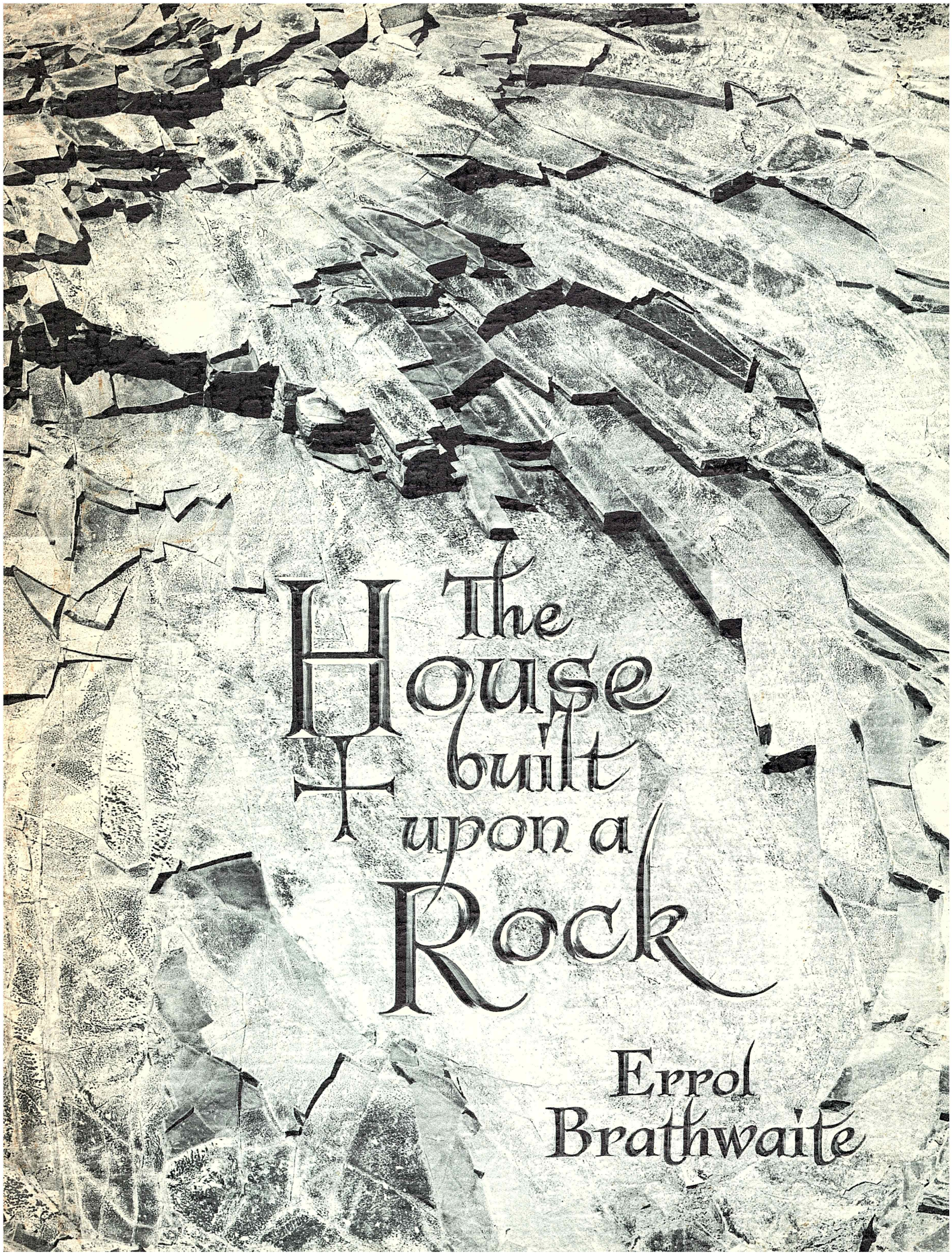
The House built upon a Rock
Errol Brathwaite

The House built upon a Rock

1866

A CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF
THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY
MERIVALE, CHRISTCHURCH

1966

Errol Brathwaite

Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

ST. MATTHEW: 7.24-25

Foreword

To record in some detail the story of any group of people over a century is not only an interesting, but also an exciting undertaking. To do so of the Church is this and more. For the Church is not a club or organisation of like-minded men and women with similar interests and background; it is a group of people, of very different outlook, background, interest and age, owing allegiance to Jesus Christ. As we look back over the past hundred years, the significant thing is the unity of purpose with which God's work was carried out in Merivale, and how much was achieved. No wonder there were times when storms broke upon the house. Yet, as we see when we read, it was indeed founded upon the rock - and that rock was Jesus Christ.

We of Merivale love our magnificant Church. We know how it helps us to worship God "in the beauty of holiness". Here we have the story of its building and of the wooden Church which preceded it. Both splendid projects when we think of the smaller population in the district, and of slumps and difficult times that were prevalent. However, the author is right in his emphasis that the Church is not the building, but the people of God. Here we have a glimpse of these people who worshipped and served in all manner of ways - a great company of clergy and lay men and women who have all, by the power of the Spirit of God working in them, built this House on the Rock. We thank God for them.

The Church is part of the Community. In these pages we have a glimpse of how people lived in the early days in the Canterbury Settlement, as well as in these modern times of cars and jet-planes. It is a picture of a community which began in the horse and buggy age, and finished in the jet-space age. As such it is a valuable piece of social research at a time of immense and unprecedented development.

This volume holds between its covers what St. Mary's, Merivale, has meant to thousands of parishioners over a hundred years. As such, it represents our centennial offering to God, of the past. What sort of offering the next century will be will depend on the way we build now for the future - on our love, our discipline, our sacrifice. We know with the help of this book what our forebears have done: they would like us, not only to match their achievements, but to excel them for the Glory of God and the cause of His Kingdom.

I wish to express most sincere thanks to the author, on behalf of myself and of the whole parish, for writing this book. As he is a well-known professional writer, our debt to him is all the greater. In addition, our warmest thanks go to Mr. R.M. Conly for designing the cover and producing the book; also to many who have supplied, and to others who have sorted through, material and records. A lot of work, involving many people has gone into this volume. They would say with me - Laus Deo.

S. E. Woods -

It has been my privilege to tackle the task of writing a history of the Parish of St. Mary, Merivale, at the time of its Centennial. I must also say that it has been my pleasure, for I have found its story absorbing and inspiring.

Please bear with me if certain personalities seem to have been sketchily dealt with, or colourful or worthy characters have been left out entirely. You see, there are three reasons, if this is indeed the case.

Firstly, a hundred years is a long stretch of time, and our forebears were not always meticulous in keeping records.

Secondly, many old Parish families have passed on, or left the Parish, and much of the detail which might have helped to clothe the bare bones of the Parish story has thus been lost.

Thirdly, I might have been more conventional in my approach. I might have listed births, deaths and marriages, names of Vestrymen, Churchwardens and other important people.

However, I believe that for most people, the chief enjoyment in reading a history lies in the opportunity it affords to make comparisons. With this in mind, I have tried to draw a picture of a growing Parish - a developing member of the Body of Christ; not concentrating too much on individuals but describing people generally, to show by their actions and collective habits just how different - and how similar - our forebears were to us.

And out of this comes the true value of any history, for it reveals a pattern of development and provides a signpost for the present and, perhaps, a guide for the future. But if this small book succeeds merely in providing a worthwhile record and a little enjoyment, I shall be content.

I feel that I must, at this point, record my deep appreciation of the assistance I have received. The research team have worked very hard indeed.

I wish to thank most sincerely all the people who took the trouble to supply me with material, or allowed us to interview them; Mrs. Edwin Hamilton Mrs. Varney, Mrs. Dent, the late Mr. Heathcote Helmore, Mrs. King, Mrs. Ruth Scanlan, Miss B.F. Webb, and a great many others. I would also like to thank Canon Purchas, Miss A.G. Merton, Miss I. Boyle and Mr. J.C. Cottrell for reading and correcting the manuscript. These are the people to whom the Parish really owes this book.

E. G. Braithwaite

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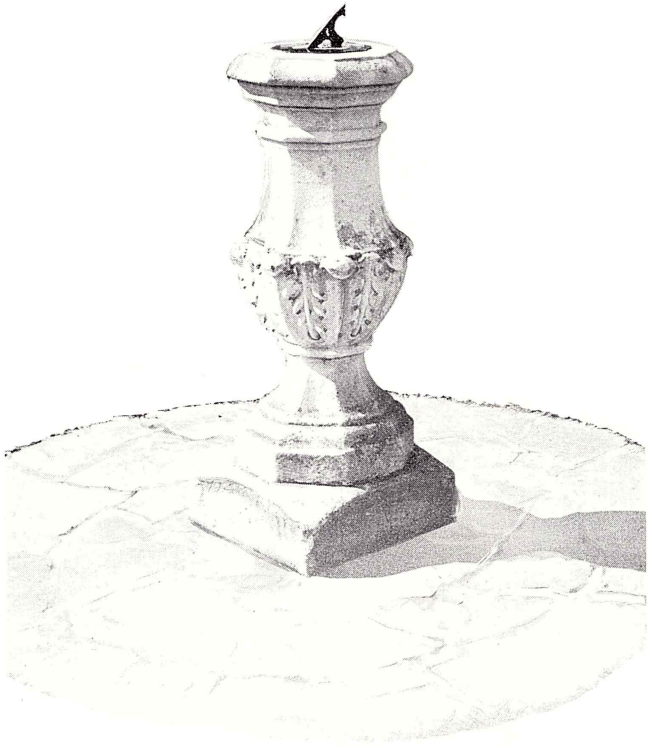


Outside back cover:

"AGNUS DEI" window, now in the Nurse's Memorial Chapel, Christchurch Public Hospital.

. . . *who built his house upon a rock*

The new church, when it arose from the muddied ground, looked graceful yet solid. The thick walls, the steadily climbing tower, began quite early to reveal the beauty of the design. It was a noble work indeed, and Archdeacon Haggitt felt a surge of pride and gratitude whenever he looked at it; for this was the new building for which he had hoped and prayed and laboured for so long. This was the strong, new church for a vigorous young Century; the work which had been deferred for financial considerations, postponed because of war; the house built to the Glory of God in this Parish of St. Mary, Merivale, rising now amidst the scaffolding and builders' gear.

Truly it had called for every ounce of determination, not only from the Archdeacon, but also from the many and devoted parishioners who had worked for it. But then, determination had always been the long suit of the men and women of St. Mary's, and the wisdom and the strength necessary to the building of a thriving Parish were never wanting.

Go back to the very earliest days. Perhaps this is what Archdeacon Haggitt did in his mind as he watched the day-by-day progress of the new church. (Certainly he could indulge in a mental pilgrimage to the Parish's beginnings. It was a measure of his love for it that he had made himself familiar with its history as few have ever been.) Perhaps, as he looked at the rising grey stone walls he saw, in his mind's eye, another scene . . .

Papanui Road, unpaved and dusty, running straight as an arrow between sparse houses and brown fields, powdered the roadside grass with dust as the new congregation of St. Mary, Merivale, gathered at its new church.

There it stood, a lovely little building; a little raw, perhaps, being fresh from the builders' hands, but seeming for all that to belong there. It stood in the Hon. J. T. Peacock's paddock, not far from the mellowing "Merivale House," built originally for Williams Sefton Moorhouse. Across Papanui Road, Andy Maher's farmhouse stood amongst tall young trees. A little farther up the road, between St. Albans Lane and May's Road, were the homes of Mr. A. E. Preece, the Hon. J. T. Peacock and Mr. Hill of the Bank of New South Wales. Between St. Albans Lane and Bealey Avenue, (at this time known as the North Belt,) besides Mr. Maher's house there were only three others; the homes of Captain Millton, Mr. Brownell and Mr. Beadmead. Mr. Beadmead's home was the smallest, a well-built, cosy cottage.

On the western side of the road there were a few more houses. The closest to the new church, facing it across what was to be known as Church Lane, was the home of Mr. F. J. Garrick. North of this was "Fassifern," a lovely home standing in some ten acres of fields and garden. The entire area behind these houses, between Papanui Road and Rossall Street, was unused land, covered with flax and swamp and known as "The Section."
The new Church of St. Mary, Merivale, was therefore virtually a country church and was, in fact, Chapel-of-Ease to St. Paul's Papanui.

It had been designed by Messrs. Speechley & Crisp, Architects, and was cruciform in plan, with a beautifully proportioned octagonal apse, consisting of nave, north and south transepts, chancel and sanctuary. It was just over 58 feet in length and nearly 18½ feet wide, and could seat perhaps 150 people.

Mr. William Wood, the Master Carpenter, had built it, signing the contract in March in this Year of Our Lord 1866, and completing it by July 1st.

And now it was December 20th. The costs had all been met - some £720 - and Bishop Harper, attended by Dean Jacobs and the Revs. J. O'B. Hoare, Henry Torlesse and Lorenzo Moore, was about to consecrate the building.

Men in their frock coats and tall hats, ladies in full-skirted Sunday best, arrived in carriages, on horseback and on foot, travelling carefully on the dusty roads and lanes, picking their way amongst the ruts and potholes, for there were no footpaths.

They knelt in their pews, in a light softened by stained glass, as the Rev. Lorenzo Moore, Vicar of Papanui

Parish, read the prayers. The harmonium lifted a pleasant voice and the church was filled with the heartily sung strains of Robinson's Cantate and the lovely Te Deum Laudamus: "The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee ... "

The Bishop mounted the pulpit steps, faced the altar and intoned: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."
"Amen," the congregation responded, and sat amid a rustle of starched skirts and the gentle creaking of pews. The Bishop faced them, looking out over their heads, letting his gaze rove for a moment over the new church. Then he spoke the Text.
"Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."
The details of his sermon are long forgotten, but he was a powerful preacher. In that new House, he had the subject for a fine sermon indeed.

The Most Holy Eucharist followed, and there, in this newest "upper room" of all, the good people of Merivale, in the Parishes of St. Paul, Papanui, and St. Luke, Manchester Street, knelt at the graceful wrought-iron railing and received the Sacrament.
St. Mary's, Merivale was consecrated to the Worship and Work of God.

Immediately, as befitted its youth and vigour, St. Mary's went to work. Clearly there had been a need for the new church, for in 1866, when the settlement was still but 16 years old, £720 was a large sum, not to be lightly raised or spent when there were so many pressing needs to be fulfilled. Certainly it called for considerable sacrifices, but there were many people of vision and spiritual stature to lead the young congregation and, by example, to set a high standard of service ... the wise men who built this House upon a Rock.
There were people like Messrs. Twentyman, Grigg, Neave, Robin, Hodges, Heaps, Law and Campbell. There were many others as well, but these are the men whose names first appear on the records of any organisation approximating a Vestry.
The Rev. Lorenzo Moore presided over their first meeting. It is recorded as a "meeting of the Congregation," presumably because St. Mary's served a Parochial District rather than a Parish. The Parish in this case, was the Parish of St. Paul, Papanui, and could have only one Vestry.
But this was a state of affairs destined to change. first meeting of representatives of St. Mary's congregation was held in 1867, and the committee served, with few changes, for a further five years. In this time they kept one ideal in mind, waiting until the time was ripe to put it into effect.

In 1870, at the Annual General Meeting, the purchase of a pipe organ was mooted, and the Committee of the day , consisting of Captain Millton, Messrs. Minchin, Joynt, Eaton, Rastrick and Willy, with Messrs. Lane and - inevitably - Twentyman still holding office as Wardens, quickly arranged for the new instrument to be obtained. (Incidentally, at this same meeting the name of the Vicar's new Assistant is mentioned. He was the Rev. J. Foulger; but his stay appears to have been short, for he does not appear in any subsequent records.)

This Committee,an energetic and forward-looking group of men dedicated to the task of seeing to the growth and increasing effectiveness of St. Mary's, was a particularly strong team. Their predecessors had numbered among them Messrs. Rhodes, Twentyman, Lane, Pavitt, Merson, Eaton, Willy, Dickinson, Mann, and Burrell, all of whom had worked long and hard for the establishment of St. Mary's as a separate Parish. Together, these men had pushed aside or flattened any difficulties which had arisen - except for one small matter which baulked them for a time. This was the St. Luke's debt.

It seems that part of the proposed new Parish was a part of St. Luke's Parish. There was a debt on St. Luke's Church, and the St. Luke's Vestry felt, with some justification, that the severing of a part of its congregation placed an added financial burden on those who remained; and since that debt had been partly incurred by, and for the benefit of, a good number of erstwhile St. Luke's people now forming part of the congregation of St. Mary, Merivale, St. Mary's should give St. Luke's some aid in clearing the debt. There was a good deal of discussion, not to say more or less acrimonious argument, on this matter, and eventually St. Mary's Committee paid St. Luke's £20 - under strong protest.
"The Vestry desires to express its sense of the unfairness of the demand, to which it would on no account submit," the Wardens wrote, "were it not for the reason that there is a prospect of securing the services of a clergyman for the proposed new Parish of Merivale."
It is not clear just what difference this "prospect of securing the services of a clergyman" made in this matter, but possibly the Parish could not be constituted while even the shadow of a debt remained on it.

But the shadow was cleared away, and at last, in 1872, the Parish came into being.

This must have come as something of a relief to the Rev. Lorenzo Moore. Mr. Moore, as Incumbent of the Parish of St. Paul, Papanui, carried the additional burden of ministering to St. Mary's; and with average attendances of 90, with one service per Sunday, held in the morning, and with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of every month, Mr. Moore virtually carried a double load of duties - and carried it for five years!

Archdeacon Haggitt, in 1916, recalled Mr. Moore's ministry, remarking: "We think kindly of the Rev. Lorenzo Moore, M. A., the first who ministered to the people of Merivale ... He was a good man, and highly esteemed, but in some of his views of doctrine, and in regard to rites and ceremonies, he was among the 'straitest Sect'." Whatever this slight reservation implies of ripples about the rock on which the House was built, whatever little oppositions he might have encountered, whatever little extra straws were added to his load, the Rev. Lorenzo Moore worked faithfully and well.

Mr. Robert Heaton Rhodes was appointed Churchwarden. His home was Elmwood, on Aikman's Road, and from his upstairs windows he could see right across the swampy fields of "The Section," that as yet unoccupied strip of land between Papanui Road and

Looking down Church Lane to the first St. Mary's, 1903.

From a watercolour painting by Mrs. J.H. Rogers.

Reproduced by kind permission of Miss R.H. Satchell.

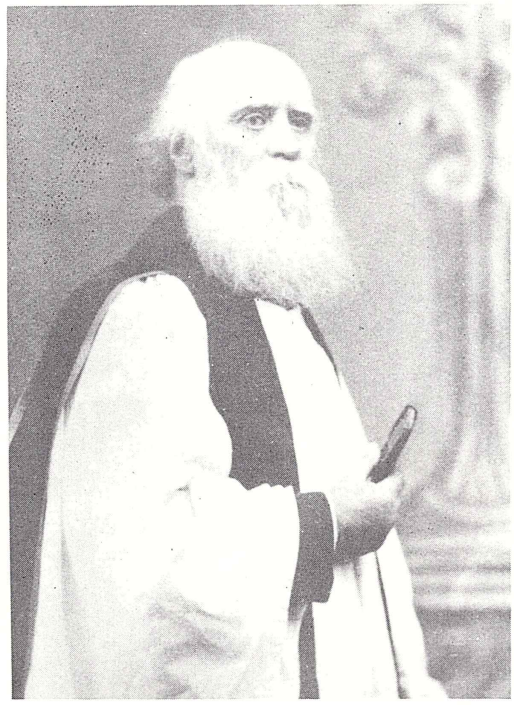
Rossall Street, to the Church. His nearest neighbours were another parishioner, Mr. Smith, and Mr. T. S. Duncan, whose old home is now St. Andrew's College.

People came to church from St. Albans Street - or Lane, as it was then known - from Carlton Mill Road, Hewitt's Road, Merivale Lane and from beyond the Parish boundaries. Innes Road and Leinster Road were still rough cart-tracks, leading to farms.

Most people walked, and it would probably be safe to say that they took care to be off Papanui Road before Cobb & Company's coach clattered and rumbled on its daily way northwards; for the road was still unpaved, and was either sloppy with mud or thick with dust, depending on the weather.

Even after the main roads were macadamised, and footpaths formed and gravelled on Papanui Road, side streets had no footpaths. The late Mr. Heathcote Helmore recalled walking to church up Merivale Lane as a child.
"We used to walk in single file up the centre of the road," he said. "The Rhodes family went in front, and our family followed behind; or sometimes we went in front and the Rhodes family followed us. But we always kept to the middle of the road, because it was better for walking than the muddy, rutted edges."

If it seems strange that the people who built some of the big and gracious homes in the Merivale area should have put up with muddy, unpaved roads and lack of



Rev. F. Knowles.

footpaths for so long, it must be remembered that, in the first place, life was not particularly easy in the first twenty years of settlement, and there were more important things than footpaths to be seen to; and in the 1860's and early '70's, whole provinces in the North Island were at war, phases of a warfare which had been going on intermittently since the 1840's, and the country's resources were dangerously strained.

In the second place, most of these homes stood in large grounds, and with meat, groceries and vegetables delivered daily, or grown on the estate in some cases, there was little need for ladies to venture out frequently. The men, of course, went to their work each day. Mr. Helmore mentioned that his father, who would have been fairly typical of the men who worked in town, rode his horse to his office in Cathedral Square every day.

Children, of course, travelled the streets daily on their way to and from school, but children, especially small boys, don't need muddy roads to bespatter themselves fairly liberally with mud. They would have found it even if the roads had been paved, and a little mud never hurt any child - or so mothers often used to say!

Mr. Twentyman, Mr. Rhodes's fellow-Warden, was probably equally relieved to see the new Parish constituted and the necessary steps taken to secure the services of a clergyman, for he had carried a heavy load, too. He had worked extremely hard towards the formation of the new Parish - indeed, it seems likely that he was one of the original proponents of the new Parochial District and Chapel-of-Ease - and he had toiled valiantly for everything St. Mary's had gained. In addition, he had acted as Mr. Moore's Assistant, taking some Sunday services; and when one considers that he was a settler in a relatively new Colony, working hard to establish his business under conditions which were often difficult, one appreciates fully the tremendously fine example he set.

The first Minute Book records that at a meeting on the 25th April, 1872, the business of securing the services of a clergyman for the new Parish was put in hand. With customary energy, the matter was promptly attended to, and less than a month later, on 7th May, three resolutions are recorded. In the order shown, they were that: "The new Incumbent receive a stipend of £250 per annum, and that appropriate house accomodation be arranged. That the following form the Vestry for the Parish of Merivale: Messrs. N. Walton, Geo. Dickinson, C. W. Duckworth, F. H. Pavitt, I. H. Twentyman. That the Rev. F. Knowles be appointed Incumbent."

The newly formed Parish took in part of St. Paul's and St. Luke's Parishes. In the south it was bounded by Bealey Avenue; in the north by Norman's Road and May's Road. The eastern boundary ran along Springfield Road, marching with St. Matthew's Parish, south to Bealey Avenue. The western boundary ran from Norman's Road, along Wairarapa Terrace, along Garden Road and thence parallel with Helmore's Lane to Wairarapa Stream again.

Almost immediately the new Vestry set about the business of building a new Vicarage, but in the meantime Canon Knowles came to live in a house on Papanui Road later enlarged by Mr. Devenish Meares for his residence.

It happened that, in 1859, Mr. E. J. Wakefield had given a section of land on the western side of Papanui Road between Holly Road and Clare Road, to be used as a site for a Church School. In the meantime, however, the Educational System adopted by the Province

relieved the Church of the necessity for building such a school; and St. Mary's Vestry, realising this, decided to approach Mr. Wakefield and ask him to alter the conditions of the Deed of Gift so as to permit of a Vicarage being built on this section. Mr. Wakefield readily agreed.

At the August meeting in 1872, it was decided to go ahead with the building, and there and then £200 was promised. At the same meeting, several other resolutions were carried, which are chiefly notable as being an indication of the fact that the young Parish had a mind of its own about practically everything, from the forms and usages of the services to the building of Vicarages.

First of all, it was resolved that a notice "be placed on the church door to the effect that all seats are to be accounted free when the bell ceases." It must not be supposed from this that people paid for admission to the church. The fact was, as many older parishioners will know, that certain families paid for the privilege of having pews reserved for their exclusive use. Mr. Montague Garrick recalls that the two Garrick families had four pews. Others had one, two or more pews reserved, paying regular pew rentals. The Vestry obviously considered that this system was all very well; but why should regular attenders and punctual people have to stand while pews remained empty?

The second resolution was that "the Vestry assent to the shortening of the morning service on Communion Sundays by the omission of the Litany, and of the prayers for which the Litany was substituted. The Litany to be read in the evening, and the change in the service and the reasons for the change to be duly announced to the congregation on the following Sunday evening."

Holy Communion, incidentally, seems to have been celebrated on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, with a 3-hour service including Holy Communion on Good Friday and Holy Communion Services on other high festival days.

The Vestry in those days consisted of as hard-working and determined a body of men as it has ever been any Parish's good fortune to possess. In fact, St. Mary's has always been fortunate in its Vestrymen, and to this day the influence and marks of some of the stronger personalities in the Vestry in those early days are discernable.

There was Mr. Isaac Gibbs, for example. Mr. Gibbs' house was about midway between St. Mary's and the Carlton corner, and he was often to be seen walking to church in the years between 1870 and the early 1900's. He came to Divine Service, he came to choir practice and he came to Vestry meetings. He was something of a power in the Vestry, and his decisions were usually accepted as final; which is to say that men trusted his judgement and deferred to his very considerable authority. Yet he was never harsh or overbearing. On the contrary, he is said to have been a genial man, radiating bonhomie on all occasions.

Mr. H. R. Webb was another strong personality, and one who did a tremendous amount for the church in those early days.

In September of 1872, it was decided to erect a school-room in addition to the Vicarage; but, of course, there were delays. The Church Property Trustees insisted on a number of alterations in the plans of the Vicarage, and work was begun rather later than had been expected.

By October, £440 had been raised or promised for the erection of the new Vicarage.

In November, "Hymns Ancient and Modern" was adopted as the hymnal to be used at St. Mary's; Mrs. W. Lane, who had been Organist for some time, was relieved of this duty by Mr. W. S. Jameson, and Mr. Simens became Honorary Choirmaster.

Interior of old Church showing Chancel and Sanctuary.

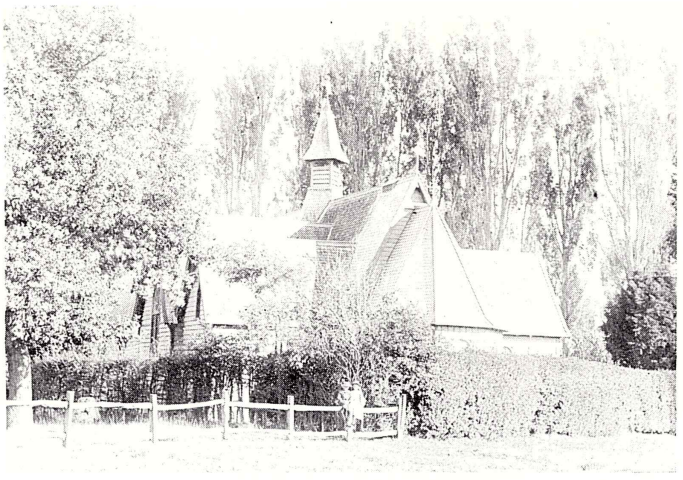
The Annual General Meeting customarily took place on or about Easter Monday, and at this time in 1873, the question of unsatisfactory ventilation in the church was raised. Steps were taken immediately to put it right.

The Vestry saw some changes in this year, the principal change being in the loss of Mr. Twentyman, who had left the Parish. He had been a Warden and a tower of strength, and his departure was greatly regretted.

But the new Wardens were popular men, particularly Mr. R. Rhodes. He was a big, bluff, hearty man who used to walk to church from his home - now Rangi-Ruru School - clad in morning coat, but as often as not hatless.

In July, the Verger's duties were reorganised. Mr. Willey, the Verger, continued in office at the princely salary of £18 per annum, and a Mr. Clark was to receive £5 per annum for attending to the grounds, now attractively planted by Mr. Abbot with shrubs.

In the district, things steadily improved. Merivale was soon considered to be the best part of town. Indeed, a Mr. Colburn, who may still be remembered by one or two older parishioners as a popular, friendly



View of the original St. Mary's Church from the east

man, living in Merivale Lane, made his living buying and selling houses for Indian Army families. It is said that his business rarely took him out of the district!

Bit by bit the side roads were macadamised and the streets lit by gas lamps; and the houses began to mellow and the trees to give the area the character that it has to this day. More and more houses were built, and where there had been paddocks, where sheep, cattle and horses had grazed, neatly gardened sections and substantial homes appeared.
Of course, the increased settlement in the district placed an ever-increasing burden on the Vicar of St. Mary's. Not that it had ever been an "easy" Parish. From the very beginning it had had its fair share of troubles.

Certainly things went well enough at first. In September the Day School opened with a roll of 40 pupils, the Misses Gray superintending this work. In 1874 a new Sunday School opened at St. Albans East, directed by Mr. and Mrs. Maling, and in May in the middle of a cold winter, it was resolved by the Vestry that gas should be laid on to the school.

All the time the congregation grew steadily as new settlers arrived in the district, and Mr. Knowles and his enthusiastic band of lay workers were kept very busy indeed. The church itself, now nearly eight years old, could no longer seat the throngs of faithful worshippers, and it had to be enlarged.

Accordingly, the nave was lengthened by twelve feet and a twelve feet wide aisle added. The north transept was lengthened, the organ dismantled and reassembled in its new place in this transept and a "Venetian Swell" added to it. Mr. Palairet now took over the duties of Organist and Choirmaster.

But the Vestry was now faced with the problem of paying for these necessary and extensive alterations, and cast about for ways of effecting economies. One of these expedients was the use of white pine for boarding the roof, a measure which was to prove costly in later years.

In September of this year, Mr. Rhodes sailed for England on a visit, and Mr. John Merson filled his place on the Board of Nominators.

By 1875, the heavy expenditure on buildings had placed a considerable burden on the finances, and the Vestry set to work with determination to reduce this liability. They initiated what was essentially a Stewardship Campaign.

The Parish was divided into four blocks; Carlton to Merivale Lane, Merivale Lane to Norman's Road - then known as Norman's Lane - with the remainder being divided into St. Albans and St. Albans East. Willing helpers sallied forth on a canvass - but the appeal was hardly a success. The overdraft at the Bank of New South Wales remained disappointingly red.

Further appeals were made, both by circular letter and from the pulpit, but the results were heart-breaking.

As if to make matters worse, Mr. Lane, who had been an able treasurer and collector, left the Parish. There is something rather delightfully Victorian about the function at which Mr. Lane, with Mrs. Lane, ex Organist, and Miss Lane, a Sunday School teacher, were farewelled.

Mr. Lane, the records tell us, received an illuminated address. Mrs. Lane was given a copy of Sir Walter Buller's "Birds of New Zealand," and Miss Lane received "Leaves from my Journal in the Highlands." But the clouds were still gathering. Now attendances were beginning to fall off, and on November 18th. the Vicar called the Vestry together to examine the financial state of the Parish. The offertories stood at about £2 per Sunday, averaging less than 2d per head. This was during a period when the country had seemed to be emerging from a serious slump, but when hard times were again looming up. Although, during this appeal, some people had been able to give generously, the response was generally discouraging in the extreme.

The strain proved too much for Canon Knowles, added to as it was by personal problems and difficulties, and in 1876 he resigned his charge of the Parish. For four long years he had worked with unflagging zeal, bearing the weight of many, many problems connected with the formation, growth and very survival of the church; and if it is a matter for wonder that he bore the burdens so well for so long, there is a very simple reason. He loved the place.

He was an artistic man, and with his own hands he painted beautifully executed texts on the beams of the church. He loved his flock, too, and the late Mr. Clarence Turner, sometime Organist in the old church, could write of him: "Mr. Knowles was a much loved man in Merivale. I recently read some beautiful letters written by him in his Merivale days to some of his parishioners in a time of great sorrow, and also in reference to the confirmation of some of their children, and these letters show him to have been a man of strong faith in God, and of sympathy for his flock. May he rest in peace." To which one must add, Amen, to that.

Troubles mounted, and financial worries increased, with no sign of improvement in sight. The winds and waves of adversity were lashing the "House Built Upon a Rock."

. . and the rain descended and the floods came

Bishop Harper, viewing the sore-beset Parish with concern, appointed the Rev. J. W. Stack as Minister-in-Charge. Mr. Stack was Maori Missioner to the Diocese, and as such was an extremely busy man, but he undertook this extra duty with vigour and enthusiasm. Nevertheless, as the months dragged on, the problem of obtaining the services of a resident clergyman became more and more acute.

In the early months of 1876, the Board of Nominators accepted the Bishop's recommendation of the Rev. Thomas Flavell for the position of Vicar of St. Mary's Merivale. Mr. Flavell seems to have required some persuasion, for he was a popular minister in his West Coast parish, and was evidently reluctant to leave it. But at Easter, 1876, Bishop Harper at last prevailed upon him to accept, and in May, "The Press" reported that he had been appointed in place of Canon Knowles at a stipend of £200 per annum.

Mr. Flavell brought a great fund of enthusiasm and energy to the Parish. In 1877, new schemes and projects were put forward and acted upon. The Vicarage was repainted and had gas laid on. The Vicar's stipend was increased to £250 per annum, suggesting an improved financial position in the Parish.

In 1878, the Vestry decided at its December meeting that the Schoolroom needed enlarging, and that a further 14 feet in length should be added. It was also decided that an evening service on Christmas Day was inadvisable; but the Vestry did leave it to the Vicar to decide whether or not the General Thanksgiving should be repeated by the congregation after the Minister!

(The Vestry evidently concerned itself with a great many aspects of the conduct of the Parish's affairs, which must have led to some extremely lively meetings in those days.)

A number of changes in the arrangement of the Chancel took place, Messrs. Studholme and Garrick donating some items of furniture.

At the Annual General Meeting in 1879, it was recommended that the Vicar's stipend be increased to £300, and this recommendation was referred to the incoming Vestry, who passed it willingly.

In 1880 there were considerable changes in the Vestry, and the Church acquired a new Lectern and Reading Desk. The Parish, in spite of the recent (and second) slump, was well and truly alive again. The finances had improved, the church was once more growing, as indicated by the enlarging of the Schoolroom, and there was a new sense of purpose and activity which increased throughout 1880.

At this time the organ was sold to Mr. Jenkins, who sold it to the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church and began the building of a new one. The price paid for the old organ was £100, and the Vicar promised to raise a further £120 towards the cost of a new instrument, this time a larger one. The Vicar's own stipend was increased to £350; the Organist, Mr. Gilmore at this time, was paid £52, and Mr. Jones, the Verger, received £30 - on condition that he washed the surplices of the new Choir! The Church itself was enlarged yet again, at a cost of £175 and a skylight was installed.

Until 1881 there had been no Cross in the Chancel, and on 13th June of this year, the records report: "Bishop Harper granted a faculty for a Retable and gilt Cross upon the Holy Table; but at once a strong opposition was aroused."

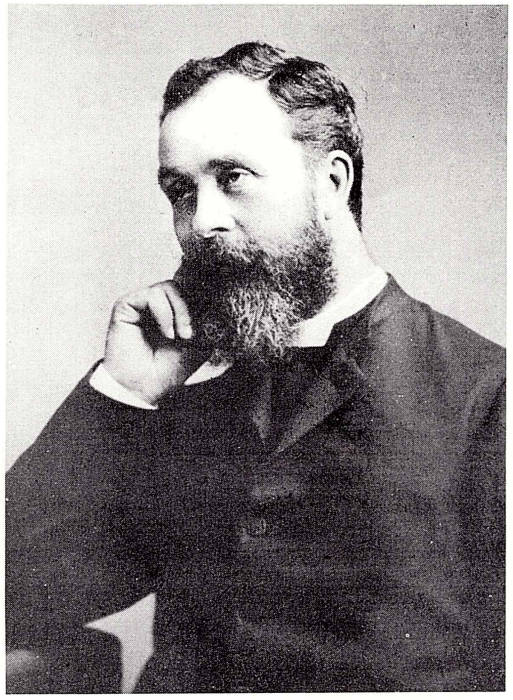
A special Vestry meeting was called to consider the matter, and the "offending ornament" was removed to the Vestry where it stood until replaced after a period of nearly two years.

The new organ was almost complete in October, but since the Cathedral organ was not yet completed, and the Cathedral Consecration Service was to take place on All Saints' Day, November 1st, St. Mary's Vestry was approached by the Bishop through his secretary, their old friend Canon Knowles, and they agreed to lend the organ to the Chapter. But it seems that the Chapter kept the organ for a much longer time than was originally agreed upon, and after a considerable amount of correspondence had passed between the Cathedral Chapter and St. Mary's Vestry, the Chapter granted St. Mary's Parish £10 as a form of compensation for the inconvenience thus caused.

In 1882, the financial state of the Parish was again causing the Vicar and his Vestry some concern. During the year, expenditure had exceeded income by about £100, and part of the cost of the new organ was still to be met. At a meeting of the Vestry, in the midst of worried discussion, the Vicar rose to his feet and offered, as an immediate measure to relieve the strain somewhat, to refund £50 of his own stipend! The offer was reluctantly accepted "with regret at the necessity which compelled acceptance."

But it was the merest stop-gap. In spite of a determined effort on the Vestry's part, assisted by the Ladies' Working Society, the accounts for 1883-84 showed

a deficit nearly as great as that for the previous year, and the Vicar, that great-hearted man, once again refunded £50 of his stipend. For a man on a £350 per annum stipend, this was a tremendous gesture; for a man in failing health, as Mr. Flavell was at this time, and one who might thus have been compelled to retire at any time, it is beyond praise.



Rev. T. Flavell.

The Vicar's health was causing some anxiety. His doctor presently ordered a complete rest, and Mr. Flavell decided to take a trip to England. The Vestry granted £50 towards his expenses, and guaranteed the balance of his stipend, some £200, for that year. Yet even while in England, this fine man kept St. Mary's very much in mind. He had accepted a commission to buy £5 worth of books for the School Library, and £5 worth of toys for the Christmas Tree.

As a matter of passing interest, the School Library List in those days contained some intriguing titles. "Camp and Field," "Bed Brightboots," "Only Wilful," "The Patriot Prince," "The Golden Rule," "The Boys' Own Favourite Library," "The Faithful and True," "Bruce's Travels in Abyssinia," may recall pleasant reading to some older parishioners. The library, by the way, listed some four hundred titles!

Canon Knowles and other clergy, as well as Messrs. A. Cox and H. R. Webb conducted services in Mr. Flavell's absence. He returned in September, his health considerably improved, and was welcomed by his parishioners at a tea party held in the Schoolroom.

The first business undertaken by the Vestry after his return was to adapt the Schoolroom to meet the requirements of the Board of Education, a project which cost some £90.

In January, Mr. Clark resigned the position of Organist, and Mr.Searell took over, at a salary of £20.

In 1886, during Lent, a series of Mission services was conducted by the Rev. G. E. Mason, one of a number of Missioners sent out from England. This particular Mission was so effective that there was an immediate and marked increase in the numbers of candidates for Confirmation, and in the numbers offering themselves for service as Sunday School teachers. And not only the spiritual, but also the financial state of the Parish took a turn for the better. The Vestry was able to report that "the receipts for the year have more than equalled the outgoings, which, in the face of the widespread depression, and the fact that the revenue has always been considerably short of the expenditure, is a matter for congratulation."

In June, the question of Parish Boundaries was raised, and after some correspondence with the Rev. W. E. Gillam, Vicar of St. Matthew's, the Vestry passed this resolution:"That this Vestry does not see its way to agree with any alteration of the Parish Boundary of Merivale, except on the basis of fair exchange."

In 1887, at the Annual General Meeting, Mr. Heaton Rhodes presented £50 towards the reducing of the Bank overdraft, which now stood at £450, and Mr. A. E. G. Rhodes placed £100 at the disposal of the Vestry.

At the first meeting of the new Vestry, Mr. Shaw, the Synodsman, was instructed to give all possible assistance to a movement in Synod regarding the "alleged misappropriation by the three City churches of the Cemetery Funds, and to see that Merivale interests did not suffer." The inquiry into this matter, incidentally, resulted in the City churches being required to refund some of this money; "but none of the suburban Parishes benefitted by the rearrangement."

By April, 1888, the financial state of St. Mary's, Merivale, had improved even further, but necessary repairs to both Church and Vicarage were considered necessary during the following months.

Now the false economy of white pine roof boarding had become very apparent, and the Architect recommended that "the shingle roof of the church be covered with corrugated iron, the existing shingle roofing being in an advanced state of rottenness."
Fortunately, the Vestry did not agree to this. While the church had, in the course of enlarging and alteration, lost some of its more pleasing proportions, it had now acquired a mellow appearance, and corrugated iron roofing would have marred its beauty. They organised roofing repairs, accepting the tender of Messrs. Rastrick, the builders who lived just a little way down Papanui Road, within the Parish. The tender was for £145, and was accepted with the stipulation that the roof be shingled with Kauri.

The Organist, at this time, asked for an increase in salary to £45. He could hardly have chosen a less propitious moment, particularly in view of the fact that he had already received two increases; and since the finances were about to be severely strained, his request was refused. He did, however, receive a promise of an end-of-year bonus - if the financial position improved!

Good management and a lively sense of Christian Stewardship seems to have marked 1889, for the Churchwardens' report shows that the overdraft had

been reduced to £180, and all outstanding accounts had been paid off. Mrs. Studholme, so often a benefactress of St. Mary's, deserves the lion's share of credit for this state of affairs, for with incomparable energy she organised a Garden Fete in her grounds on February 14th and 15th, as a result of which she was able to hand over a nett return of £313! So greatly improved were the finances that Mr. Flavell was paid a bonus at the end of the year, and even Mr. Searell got his rise after all, on condition, of course, that he act as Choirmaster as well, and wear the usual Organist's surplice.

The use of the Cathedral Psalter was approved in this year, and the Vicar's stipend was hence forth to be paid monthly, instead of quarterly.

In August, when Archdeacon Bowen paid the Parish his annual visit, he found it to be in good heart and excellent condition. In fact, there was only one small cloud in its sky. The Choir was experiencing some difficulties.
To investigate and, if possible, to remedy this, the Vestry appointed a special Committee. This Committee reported that "it was found to be quite impossible to place any reliance on an entirely voluntary Choir of men, and further it was ascertained that the lady members were placed at a very serious disadvantage owing to the paucity of attendance of men choristers. In fact many had ceased attending practice in consequence of the severe "strain put on them for that reason."
The committee decided, with some reluctance, that the only remedy lay in having four paid lay clerks, and this arrangement was tried with moderate success. At least four male voices could be counted upon in the Choir stalls at each service.

Unfortunately this scheme fell through, because Mr. Searell, the Organist, resigned at the end of the year. Mr. Clarence Turner succeeded him as Organist, and Mr. Normington took up duty as Choir Master at the salary of £25 per annum.

This particular experiement seems to have been tremendously successful, and a marked improvement in the musical element of the services was remarked upon; so much so that in 1890, having tasted the joy of good musical accompaniment and a good lead in the singing, the congregation empowered the Vestry to obtain paid assistance for the Choir, provided they could not obtain voluntary help.

Financially, by 1890, the Parish was in a still stronger financial state, and the overdraft was reduced by £27. When Archdeacon Cholmondeley visited St. Mary's in September, he found everything to be in first class order.

Then, in 1891, Mr. Flavell called the Vestry together and tendered his resignation. He told them that he wished to spend three or four years in England to increase his experience, and that he was in no way dissatisfied with the Parish. Indeed, it was unlikely that he should be, since he had laboured with it and for it, and seen it grow in strength and witness for fourteen years. The Vestry tried hard to dissuade him, not especially hopefully, but found that he had quite decided, and they accepted his resignation with great regret.

A large gathering of parishioners in the Schoolroom expressed deep appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. and Mrs. Flavell during their long stay in Merivale.

At the Annual General Meeting on April 13th, Mr. Black, the Vicar's Warden, announced that the Rev. J. C. Merton had been appointed, and would be instituted at the end of the month.

Mr. Flavell remained in England. He worked in the diocese of Truro and Exeter, and died, a very old man, as Vicar of Christow, in Devonshire.

Actually, the institution of the new Vicar took place at Evensong, Sunday, 3rd May, and a social gathering was held in the Schoolroom on the following Wednesday to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Merton.

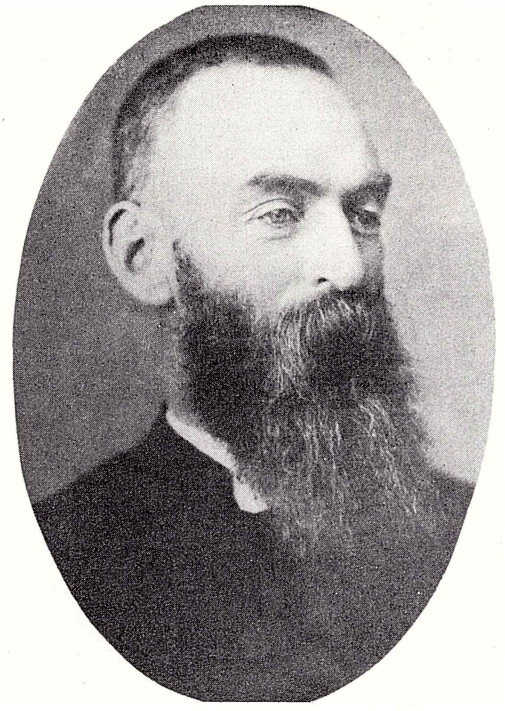
The Parish to which Mr. Merton came was a vastly different proposition from that which had been taken over in 1876 by Mr. Flavell. There were many more houses. The roads were flanked by gravelled footpaths, and were macadamised. Gas lamps lit the streets. Trees had grown, and the grounds of the Church and Vicarage were pleasant with shrubs and trees. Indeed, Merivale was well on the way to becoming a garden suburb, although there were still many vacant lots, and horses and cows could still be seen grazing over much of the land.

Mr. Merton and his Vestry began with some minor changes. The bell was so arranged that it could be tolled from the West End, and the Verger was relieved of the duty of organ blowing, Mr. H. G. Allen taking over at a salary of £5 per annum. Many years later, Mr. Clarence Turner, the Organist, recounted that Mr. Jones, the Verger, who was his very great friend, had to give up organ blowing because of his years. In all the years during which he had performed this duty, he had only once let it down badly. This was on a Christmas morning. The Choir, half way up the aisle in procession, were singing the "Adeste" with power and feeling. Suddenly the wind of the bellows failed, and the old man came out from the side of the organ into the choir with his coat over his arm. He offered only one simple but sufficient explanation. "It's too jolly 'ot," he remarked, and walked out of the church.

In January, 1893, Mr. Normington resigned his position as Choirmaster, and the Vicar took control of the Choir. The Rev. J. C. Merton was an able musician and possessed a fine voice, and under his direction the Choir maintained a very high standard.

In August, the Vicar called a special meeting of the Vestry and announced that his doctor had ordered six months' rest at once. The Vestry decided, immediately and unanimously, to grant Mr. Merton six months leave of absence on full pay, and a sub-committee was appointed to take care of all necessary arrangements. The Rev. Arthur Fox acted as Locum Tenens during the Vicar's absence, with the Bishop and the Revs. J. Teakle, H. Williams, W. Harper and Mr. H. R. Webb taking services at various times.

There seems to have been a small flutter of apprehension in the Choir concerning the ability of Mr. Fox as leader, and Mr. Maitland Gard'ner was appointed



Rev. C. J. Merton.

Choirmaster for six months. Otherwise the Parish evidently ran along smoothly enough; and in March, 1894, Mr. Merton arrived back in Merivale and took up his duties again, his health fully restored.

It is interesting to note that, during this year, the Ladies' Working Society, in addition to financing the Sunday School, supplied the Vicarage with a bathroom and the necessary water supply! Several improvements were made in the Vicarage grounds at this time, also.

During the Vicar's absence, the overdraft had increased, and an appeal now brought £56 to help reduce it.

In 1895, at the Annual General Meeting, a recommendation was made to the new Vestry that "all sittings be made free if compatible with the financial position of the Parish." Finance was still a worrying problem, however, and pew rents could not be readily dispensed with. In May, the Vestry dispensed with Mr. Gard'ner's services as Choirmaster; at the same time the Vicar was requested to act in this capacity until December. This he was unable to do, as shortly afterwards he resigned.

In March, 1896, the Rev. H. Airey Watson accepted nomination to St. Mary's, Merivale, and he was instituted by Bishop Julius on Wednesday, 22nd April. He was welcomed by a large gathering of parishioners on April 29th.

Mr. Devenish Meares was appointed Vicar's Warden at this time, and Mr. H. C. Satchell Parishioners' Warden. The Vestry consisted of Messrs. R. Heaton Rhodes, Isaac Gibbs, G. L. Greenwood, G. F. Meadows, A. H. Allen, F. W. Thompson, C. Treweek, A. H. Hobbs, W. B. Common and Walcot Wood. Mr. Clarence Turner was succeeded by Mr. T. Faulkner, as Organist and Choirmaster.

Mr. Faulkner was totally blind. He is remembered to this day as a superb organist, and was a familiar figure in Christchurch in those days, being often seen walking about town with a small boy guiding him.

Things seem to have gone smoothly enough over the next two years. The Church ventilation, never very satisfactory, was further improved, and in 1899, the possibility of replacing, or adding to, the Parish Notes with a separate Parish Magazine was considered, though nothing was done about it at that time.

On December 27th, 1899, there was a fire in the Vicarage. Considerable damage was done, but this was repaired and the opportunity taken to effect other needed repairs to parts of the building untouched by the fire.

Miss West had taken over as Organist from Mr. Faulkner, but in March, 1899, she resigned. This was considered as something of a blow to Choir and Vestry, and as a mark of their sincere appreciation of her services, she was presented with a suitably inscribed piece of plate.

In 1900, St. Mary's Parish achieved something which was rather appropriate to the start of a brand new Century. The efforts to clear the overdraft were wholly successful, and for the first time, the "House Built Upon a Rock" was completely free of debt! The Twentieth Century was entered with a small credit balance of £13. 12. 0; not a large sum, but still a credit balance. It seemed to augur well for the future. In 1901, Miss G. Dobson took over the position of Organist, and Mr. A. D. Dobson that of Choirmaster.

In November, discussions were held on the practicability of acquiring some land adjoining the church with a view to bringing church, school and Vicarage together. The Church Property Trustees were unwilling at this time to make any offer, however, and the matter had to be postponed.

In February, 1902, a special parishioners' meeting was held, and the Vestry was authorised to buy the section of land between the church and Papanui Road. It was bought from Mr. E. Y. Cox, who had purchased it at auction for £460 and was prepared to make it over to the Trustees on behalf of the Parish. Truly and in every way, the Parish was progressing. The House stood firm and fast ... and then came the "rain and floods and winds."

In February, 1902, the Churchwardens, Messrs. G. L. Greenwood and E. Y. Cox conferred together about certain Parish matters which they felt needed correcting. It is too long ago, now, to know the full extent of these matters, nor is it fitting to dig them up again. But there were definitely undercurrents of dissatisfaction over a number of things, not the least of which was in the matter of doctrines and ceremonies. It will be recalled that not so very many years before, when a gilt Cross had been placed on the altar, strong pressure had been exerted from some quarters to have it removed.

Let it be said at once that there is nothing so terribly wrong about this. It amounts to a question of conscience, and the proper climate for individual worship. But Mr. Watson was a High Churchman, at

least comparatively, and it seems clear that feeling had built up again.

At all events, Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Cox, as Churchwardens, had a responsibility to both Vicar and Parish, and if what they did was unprecedented, it at least shows that they were doing their honest best to correct matters discreetly. For the result of their conference was a letter, sent to the Vicar. It read:

"Reverend and Dear Sir,

We wish to lay before you the present condition of the Parish, and what we think are some of the causes of what is undoubtedly unsatisfactory therein; also what we fear in the near future if matters continue as at present.

We know you expect your Churchwardens to inform you of anything in the Parish which, if unattended to might injure the interests of the Church, or your own."

Up to this point, the letter was obviously the honest attempt of two men who were deeply concerned over the welfare of the Parish to inform their Vicar of things which he clearly should know. For that matter, so was the rest of the letter, but there is that in the rest of it which reveals that both men were being subjected to pressures of opinion, including their own, and it lacked in tact what it gained in honesty.

"You must be aware that, in spite of the scores of new houses built and occupied in the Parish during the last five years, and the congregations are smaller now than when you took charge. Now, what are the causes? It is painful even to suggest that any shortcomings on the part of yourself or Mrs. Watson have anything to do with this deplorable state of things, or with the general dissatisfaction of which it is the outward and visible sign; but we can say with confidence that this is the opinion of a large proportion of the parishioners, and that this dissatisfaction has become so acute that we fear that it will find some public utterance in a way that will prove painful to you and to the Church generally. We fear that at Easter no one will undertake the offices of Churchwardens and Vestrymen, in which case we should lose our status as a Parish. We also doubt if the Ladies' Guild will resume work. We recognise your zeal and ability and the devotion you have shown to your work, but still feel that it is our duty to specify some matters which have, in our opinion, contributed in some degree to bring about the present apathy and hostility; This we do with much pain as we look on you as a true, sincere and valued friend, and feel that this letter will distress you. Much of what we are now writing would have been said or written long ago but for Mrs. Watson's state of health and your anxiety about your child. People from time to time remark that they never leave the church strengthened, encouraged, cheered or comforted; that they are urged to fast, to attend Holy Communion, and to give to God's service; that you often enlarge on, and urge them to repent of, their sins and shortcomings, or God's judgement will surely overtake them; but that they hear little "of God's love for His erring children, and of His readiness to help those who seek that help by earnest prayer. Like the Baptist, you preach, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,' rather than the Gospel, of which we are told that 'the common people heard Him gladly." We have often heard the remark, "Mr. Watson does nothing but scold us." It cannot be denied that the majority of those who used to come to our church now come very seldom, if at all, and that the young people confirmed there, as a rule, soon cease to attend, and that our congregation is largely made up of those who are comparative strangers. Some people complain that they, and still more their children, find great difficulty in following your reading of the prayers and lessons, and give this as their reason for non-attendance at church. Lastly, we would mention a letter sent to Mrs. Parsons by Mrs. Watson, and shown to others, which has produced a wave of angry feelings. As far as we can learn, the parishioners sympathise with Mrs. Parsons, and we fear that many of them will, in consequence, desert the Merivale church and decline to contribute to its funds. We can see nothing in Mrs. Parsons's conduct to account for such a letter being sent to her. She and her husband had left the Merivale church and had joined another congregation and were not in any way bound to contribute to the purchase of the land; and to revive the unpleasantness of some months before was, we think, a very unwise and mischievous act. We have heard that you had thoughts of returning to England, and if you are really contemplating such a step, the announcement of the intention and of your resignation would, no doubt, cut short any further unpleasantness. The task of canvassing for financial support which we must have, if the Parish to to pay its way, is always a disagreeable duty, and may become fruitless if matters are allowed to drift. People, as a rule, do not complain to you or to us, but simply cease going to church, or, go elsewhere. We are sending this letter without the knowledge of any Vestryman, so that if you wish to talk these matters over with us in a friendly way it may remain simply a private letter between friends. We sincerely trust that you will receive this letter in the spirit in which we have tried to write it, and that whatever happens we may still remain friends in the best sense of the word.

We remain, dear sir,
Yours very sincerely,
G. L. Greenwood.
Edwd. Y. Cox. "

It seems clear enough, at this distance, that here were two perplexed, not to say acutely worried men, subjected to pressures from a number of sources and honest enough to be frankly partisan with some.

One can feel a twinge of sadness for them, they were not, by nature, more diplomatic. At all events, any spirited man, as Mr. Watson certainly was, could be excused for taking the view that with such friends as these, what need of enemies?

That the letter was not entirely privy to the Vicar and the two Churchwardens became very plain to Mr. Watson some ten days later, when he might have been

expected to have felt more like taking his Churchwardens at their final word. For he received yet another letter.
It read:

> "We, the undersigned parishioners, considering the letter sent to you by Messrs. Cox and Greenwood was a private one, request you not to read or discuss the same from the pulpit. If, however, you still think it necessary to do so, we must request you, in fairness to the writers, to read the whole of it, and not extracts only; and should you deal with it in church, we request you to convene a meeting of parishioners to be held in the schoolroom, at 8p.m. on Thursday next, to consider the whole subject.

This letter was signed by the Churchwardens and three other parishioners. Consider the poor Vicar's probable feelings. There was so much that was hurtful in the first letter, whether it was intended to be so or not. Even the reference to complaints of people's inability to follow him in the prayers and lessons could have seemed to him to be barbed, for he had an unfortunate impediment in his speech.

Then, on top of this, came the second letter, not only making it known to him that the first letter was not a completely private one, but also that he was being ordered to refrain from giving his views and his side of the matter to his congregation; how many of whom knew of this business he had no idea.

The Vicar's reaction was, in the circumstances, the only proper one. He read the entire first letter to the congregation at Matins and at Evensong on the following Sunday, and he did convene a special meeting for March 6th.

The next move seemed to be up to the Churchwardens. They came to Mr. Watson after some deliberation and presented him with two motions which they desired him to put to the meeting, "with a view to stopping public scandal." The first read: "That questions at issue between the Churchwardens and the Vicar, together with the correspondence recently published, should be placed in the hands of the Bishop, and that he be asked to confer with the Vicar and Vestry."

At first Mr. Watson thought that he would accept this, but on further consideration he suggested a somewhat different motion; "That this meeting of parishioners is of the opinion that the whole trouble distracting the Parish should be laid before the Bishop with the request that he should deal with it as he thinks best."

The second motion was one asking the meeting to express disapproval of the Vicar's conduct. The Vicar rejected this motion out of hand.

In the first place, he argued, they could not pass such a motion blindfold, without the whole matter being discussed before them; which would, he shrewdly pointed out, defeat the very object the movers had in view - that of avoiding public scandal. In any case, he told them, he was not at all prepared to admit that he had acted wrongly in any particular.

The meeting was well attended, with, as seems to be usual at church functions, a preponderance of women. Archdeacon Lingard took the chair, remarking that he had been sent by the Bishop to conduct the proceedings.

"When I saw in the "Press" this morning a local news paragraph stating that there would be a meeting of parishioners held this evening to consider a letter from the church officers asking their Vicar to resign," Archdeacon Lingard said, "I felt on the first blush of the thing that I ought, as the only Archdeacon in the place, to try and offer some help in the matter. My reasons for offering my services are because I think it manifestly unfair to your Vicar to require him to be Chairman at the meeting, when his freedom of speech would be limited, and when it would also be distasteful for him to be required, as Chairman, to put resolutions of any kind to the meeting. Therefore, in order to avoid that, I offered to take the chair."

The Archdeacon then read the Bishop's commission, instructing him to attend the meeting. "I assure you," he said, "that I am perfectly disinterested. I am here to support neither the Churchwardens nor the Vicar."

Mr. H. P. Hill, one of the signatories of the second letter, then rose to his feet and suggested that the meeting should decide as to whether the press representatives should be allowed to remain.
"There has been enough scandal in the Church of England lately as it is," he said. "We don't want any more. This meeting should say here and now whether it wants the Merivale troubles put into public print and read as spicy readings."
Mr. Cox reported that the Bishop had expressed a wish that the matter should be publicly ventilated, and Mr. Forwood agreed that this was so.

Mr. Watson now rose to his feet and read two letters of apology, one from Mr. W. B. Dixon, who expressed confidence in Mr. Watson as Vicar, and one from Mr. H. W. Winstone, junr., expressing a similar sentiment on behalf of the young men of the Parish.

The Vicar then announced that a reconciliation had been effected that day between the two ladies mentioned in the letter, an announcement which brought considerable applause.

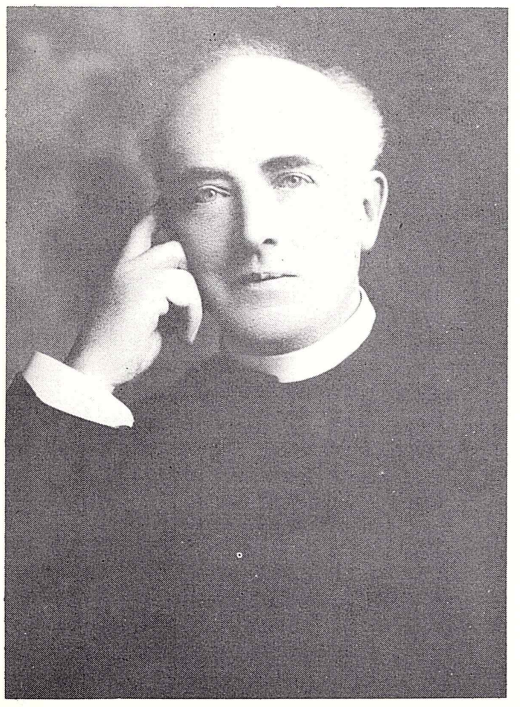
Mr. Watson now addressed the meeting, saying that it was unspeakably sad that a state of friction should exist between a Parish priest and "even a small portion of his flock." He went on to say that "it is far more sad that it should be made a public scandal and the Church is made a laughing stock for free-thinkers and the godless. It is very sad to me," he said, "because it is certain to injure our reputation as a Parish."

Perhaps some of the trouble had its roots in the fact that Mr. Watson could, on occasion, be somewhat tactlessly outspoken, or at least devastatingly honest.

"Before I came," he now announced, "I heard the very unenviable reputation Merivale had acquired of always quarrelling with its clergymen." This was an obvious exaggeration, if considered as a fact, but he was undoubtedly honest enough in reporting hearsay as he had heard it.

"I had hoped," he said, "that we were gaining a better character, but this present position is a sad falling-

back. This public meeting will advertise the fact of disagreement amongst us, and outsiders, not knowing the facts, will say that Merivale has never got on with any of its Vicars, and must be a quarrelsome place. Already I've heard from old Christchurch residents that they are not surprised at this present disturbance, that Merivale has always quarrelled with its Vicars, and that they are very sorry for me. In this Parish there are many whom I call friends, and to whom I am very strongly attached, and it pains me that they should be compelled undeservedly to bear the disgrace and shame of this quarrel. Wherever the "Press" is read, there will their shame be published. We must set ourselves determinedly to living this scandal down, and to win a better name. Frankly, I've heard nothing whatever worth calling you together for this night. To my mind it is a grievous mistake. Is this not so, when enemies of the Faith are forever on the lookout for occasion to scoff when Christians create a public scandal?"



Rev. H. L. Watson.

He went on to tell the meeting how the two Churchwardens had called on him with their two motions, aimed at stopping public scandal, and how he had fully agreed that it ought to be stopped, but could not accept their motions. Though he felt bound to regret both motions, he fully appreciated the conciliatory spirit shown by Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Cox. He had offered his motion in the same spirit and they, on their part, had expressed their willingness to accept.
"I feel sure," he said, "that the peace restored will be a solid and lasting peace. I, with Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Cox, will ask that the motion be passed without discussion."

Mr. Watson now read the meeting a statement from Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Cox, saying that they had often discussed the state of the Parish, and that they feared that it was drifting.

Mr. Fairlie Hobson now stood up and asked whether the resolution withdrew all implications against the Vicar that had been made in the original letter, "which had been published throughout the Parish."

Archdeacon Lingard now took control of the meeting as Chairman. He told Mr. Hobson that the resolution withdrew nothing at all. Mr. Hobson said: "Then would it not be better for the Bishop to be told that the Parish sympathises with the Vicar - or vice versa, as the case may prove to be?" This was virtually a suggestion that the rights and wrongs of the matter be put to the vote there and then; but the Archdeacon, if he recognised it as such, must have realised that this meeting, though fairly well attended, could scarcely claim to be the voice of the entire Parish. To test either claim, enquiry would need to be made of the entire congregation of St. Mary's, and there was a much better way of going about settling the matter than that of canvassing the Parish on such a matter.

"I think that this meeting should vote on the resolution," he said. "If it is carried, then you must instruct somebody to place the matter before the Bishop."

After some discussion, the resolution was amended to read: "That this meeting of Parishioners is of the opinion that the whole of the trouble between the Churchwardens and the Vicar be laid before the Bishop with the request that he deal with it as he thinks best."

The matter should have ended there, but it was perhaps inevitable that it did not. "Truth" published an Editorial opinion on the matter under the heading: "WHY THE GODLESS MOCK." This somewhat dramatic headline preceded an article which was largely favourable to Mr. Watson, and sensibly took the attitude that "the matter has been referred to the Bishop to deal with, but it is to be hoped that the Parish will follow the Vicar's suggestion and let it drop ... Merivale had better turn over a clean page, gum down the old one, and begin afresh."

But there were letters to the Editor in the daily papers, sometimes departing, as such letters are prone to do, from the original point and defending the views of "Freethinkers" and the "godless," or defending or refuting the view that "Merivale has the reputation of quarrelling with its clergymen."

The Vicar, understandably, had been deeply wounded. The Churchwardens, equally understandably, had been forced into maintaining a position which was not always tenable and which, in all fairness, it had never been their intention to occupy. It was simply that the thing had got out of hand.

Mr. Watson, in firing the final shot when he tendered his resignation at the next Annual General Meeting, possibly put his finger on the real root and cause of dissention - foreshadowed by the outcry over the Cross on the altar some time before. "Either I can remain," he said "in which case no spiritual work done by me will have much effect for a long time to come, or I must go. Duty leaves me no alternative ... The more serious matter is with regard to the increased ritual in public worship, some regarding this as a step towards Rome, they having an unreasoning horror of anything Rome did ... Rome, in her wisdom, recognised that God made the eye as well as

the ear and the heart. To many, beauty of worship suggests beauty of holiness, beauty of repentance, and beauty of service."

The matter being thus reopened, there was a certain amount of more or less restrained discussion, with some mildly regrettable statements from both sides, to which the Vicar and Churchwardens wisely refrained from contributing. The Vicar finally rose to say that it was as well to close the meeting, since there could be no good in further discussion.

Whatever the justification for both sides of the argument, it could be shown that financially, in the numbers of Communicants and in the overall numbers of the congregations at Divine Service, the Parish had made progress during Mr. Watson's incumbency.

One final rumble, perhaps the final sign of high feeling within the Parish, occurred. Mr. Cox announced that the combined Board of Parochial and Diocesan Nominators had, on the previous Wednesday, unanimously nominated the Rev. C. H. Gossett to the cure of the Parish, and that His Lordship the Bishop had heartily concurred in the appointment.

Mr. Forwood said it seemed extraordinary to him that the Nominators should go and nominate a new clergyman within a few days of the election of a new Board. He held that it was sharp practice, and not creditable to the Church. Mr. Greenwood said that the law of the Church compelled the nomination of a new clergyman as soon as a vicar resigned. Mr. Watson then told Mr. Forwood that he had not yet received a letter from the Bishop accepting his resignation, and Mr. Forwood held that, in that case, there had been no resignation, and the nomination was illegal. Discussion regarding the law on the matter followed and, sound judgement prevailing, Mr. Forwood suggested that if the subject was not a question for discussion, he would withdraw what he had said.

The Vicar now nominated Mr. J. A. Brown as Vicar's Warden. Mr. E. Y. Cox was re-elected People's Warden, and Messrs. A. H. Allen, H. G. Deal, H. P. Hill, H. C. Satchell, J. Winstone, A. E. Baker, G. L. Greenwood, I. Gibbs, A. V. Hargreaves and H. Forwood were elected as Vestrymen.

The storm was over, and the House stood, though it had been badly buffeted.

Interior of old Church, decorated for Harvest Festival.

. . . *I will build thee an house*

The Rev. C. H. Gossett arrived in July. He was an amiable, hardworking man who became exceedingly popular almost immediately. Indeed, if any had wishes to find fault with him they would have found little enough to complain about - unless it was his slight absent-mindedness; and even this was a lovable trait rather than an annoying one. One parishioner tells a story which illustrates this delightfully.

On 21st August, 1902, this lady was confirmed at St. Mary's. She was, at that time, a boarder at Mrs. Croasdaile Bowen's School, and had been prepared for Confirmation at St. Michael's by Archdeacon A. W. Averill (later Archbishop of New Zealand). However, Confirmation at St. Michael's was to take place after the school had closed for the mid-year holidays, and Archdeacon Averill therefore arranged for Mrs. Bowen's country boarders to be confirmed at St. Mary's Merivale.

Five girls were taken to St. Mary's on the 21st August. It was a very wet night, and the girls were bundled into a two-horse cab; and, accompanied by Miss Alice Bowen, a House Mistress at the school, they arrived at the Church.

Outside the church, a large crowd huddled under umbrellas and whatever other shelter they could find. On the road stood a cab, and in it My Lord Bishop Julius sat, robed and exceedingly wrath. He was scolding Archdeacon Gossett in a loud and carrying voice, because the poor Archdeacon had forgotten to bring his keys - and so had the Churchwardens and Vestrymen.

Several people offered to go to the Vicarage which, of course, was some distance down Papanui Road, but the Bishop vetoed this plan immediately. It would take far too long, he argued. As he had been speaking, he had noticed a small window open a fraction not far from the main door and he climbed quickly from his cab and walked towards it. He ordered a Churchwarden, a powerful man, to give him "a leg up," and soon the congregation was treated to the spectacle of their Bishop, in his robes, scrambling through the church window. Once inside, he was able to unlock the door from within, and presently the Confirmation Service was able to begin. Bishop Julius, in his address, turned the incident to good account. "Now, boys and girls, young men and women," he said, "always remember, if you get into an awkward position - put your brains to work. Never give in. Ask God's help and you will win through. What first appears to be an insurmountable obstacle will soon be overcome. . . "

In Archdeacon Gossett's first month as Vicar of St. Mary's, several important moves were made. It was decided to sell the present Vicarage and School and to apply the proceeds to the building of a new Vicarage and School on the newly purchased land, between the church and Papanui Road.

In October, plans for the new School were submitted, and the site was selected; it was to be built on that part of the new section adjoining Papanui Road. The tender was let in 1904 and provided for the completion of the building by the middle of August in that year.

During the next two years the congregation seems to have grown, for at the Annual General Meeting in April, 1906, it was resolved that the church be enlarged, and that every third row of seats be free! In the same month, Mr. Gossett's stipend was increased from £250 to £300 per annum.

In November, an arrangement was made with St. Matthews jointly to engage a Deaconess at a salary of £50 per annum, and this, too, seems to testify to a growing and vital Parish, as does the fact that in 1907 the idea of building a new church was mooted! It was immediately decided to consult an architect for this purpose.

By 1909, although nothing further had been done about the new church idea, it had been found necessary to increase the staff. In November, the Rev. E. C. W. Powell was appointed Assistant Curate.

In 1911, yet another sign of the changing times and attitudes became apparent. A special Parish meeting was called to consider the question of pew rentals. A growing body of opinion held that seats should be free, and it is interesting to note that "a further reason was that some of the ladies of the congregation were seat holders and were amongst the most regular attenders; and that as these ladies "had no vote and could therefore have no voice in the matter, it was considered that they were entitled to consideration."

The decision reached was that all seats that "may hereafter be given up by the present holders, or are at present vacant shall not be let."

In 1912, Mr. Powell, the Curate, resigned and took up an appointment as Vicar of Methven. He was succeeded by the Rev. J. Hay.

In 1913, Mr. Gossett left with his family on a trip to England, and the Rev. Ford Hutchinson acted as Locum Tenens. During this year, Mr. Clarence Turner again took over the duty of Organist.

Mr. Gossett returned in 1914, arriving back in February, and in May the Vestry passed a motion that a new church be erected at an approximate cost of £10,000; a commentary, perhaps, on the strengthened state of the Parish, both numerically and financially, and on the increased cost of building, even allowing for the more ambitious design upon which they had now decided. Between £10,000 and the £750 for the original church, there is a vast, fixed gulf.

Then, in 1914, war was declared against Germany, and all building schemes had to be held in abeyance.

The Great War changed the face and course of civilisation. It is only to be expected that it should bring changes to the Parish. Like all Parishes, Merivale met the challenges of war as best it could, forming organisations and numbering individuals who embarked on patriotic projects with enthusiasm. There was the Girls' Guild, which sewed for servicemen overseas, the Merivale Soldiers' Sewing Guild, which became a branch of the Red Cross Society in 1916; and much other work was done to assist the war effort in an endeavour to make life a little easier for servicemen at the front.

And Merivale had many such. Prominent Parish families, names that appear in the records again and again as workers for and benefactors of St. Mary's, now appeared in ever-lengthening lists of Parishioners at the fighting fronts, and those missing and killed in action.

The Parish Magazine for September 5th, 1916, for example, contains a list which reads like a Christchurch Who's Who. It lists Gordon Drury, Gerald Holderness, Arthur Harrison, Justin Westenra, Patrick Laurie, Major A.E. Loach, Llewellyn Lawrence, Thos. L. Steele, J. Stone, Arthur Ponder, Parker Westenra, Harry Pine, William Harold Male, Jack Graham, Samuel McGee, Walter Stockdale, Gerald Stedman, Ralph Stedman, Trevor Burwood Cargill, Leonard Tosswill, Roy Deacon, Bruce Norton, Henry McHugh, Alan Austen, Jack Watkins, Brett Wood, Derisley T. Wood, Ernest Creswell Helmore, Oliver Harrison, Gerald Harrison, Tahu Rhodes, Beresford Wilcox, Gordon McIntosh, Edgar Paintin, Herbert Paintin, John Weld, Eric Moore, Alexander Harvey, Ernest Harvey, Clarence Keys, Vesey Robinson, James Gray, William Gray, Harold Holm Biss, Frank Agar, Cyril Scales, Jack Sharpe, Fred Sharpe, Henry Devenish Skinner, William Harvey, John Edward Wild, Rickards Webb, R.G. Hickmott, Brian Blunt, Ernest Tipping, Archibald Firth; all men at the fighting fronts, or on their way to them. Killed in action were Noel Syme, Frank Martin and A. Gray, with Isaac C. Gossett missing. All those names from the Parish of St. Mary, Merivale ... and the war had still over two years to run.

They had a prayer at St. Mary's for those on active service: "Guard with Thy loving care those that are in peril, whether on land or sea. May they feel the everlasting arms underneath. Keep them safe in life or death, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

During those years, the Governor General, Lord Liverpool, attended services at St. Mary's. A good many parishioners will remember him in his grey morning suit and grey topper, walking with his entourage to church.

Those were the years, too, when Archdeacon Haggitt himself came to St. Mary's. He was a man of boundless energy and he breathed new life into the Parish. In 1916 he launched what was in essence a Stewardship Campaign. It was simple and direct consisting of a circular letter addressed from Merivale Vicarage and dated June, 1916.

Archdeacon C.H. Gossett, and the Assistant Curate, the Rev.W H. Stych with members of the Choir - 1917.

"My dear Parishioners," The Vicar wrote, "we must surely all be very thankful that in these days we live in New Zealand. There is, I suppose, no country in the world that is enjoying more prosperity than that which we enjoy.

On the other hand, the mission work of the Church and our Missionaries are suffering. Should we not as a Parish be doing more for them than we are doing? These Missionaries suffering in Melanesia, China, India, Japan, etc., represent you and me - they are our Missionaries. Jesus Christ has given us our marching orders. "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations." And He has taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." Are we obeying those orders? Can we use the Lord's Prayer and really pray, "Thy Kingdom come," if we are not taking our share in support of the Missions?"

Familiar stuff? Quite so; but read on.

"Will you help me to raise £150 within the next twelve months, in addition to what we already give? If only a penny a week, or even three pence a month were given by each Parishioner, (including children), the result would be £500 or £600!

"I propose to apportion the money as follows:- 40 per cent to Melanesia, 20 per cent to the Maori, 30 per cent to C. M. S. (for salary of first Ainu clergyman,) and 10 per cent to British and Foreign Bible Society.

If you are willing to do your little bit, (say one penny a week or month,) will you kindly fill in the form underneath, which will duly be called for about June 20th? Envelopes will be given to you and will be called for regularly at the beginning of each month. What you contribute will be known by no one except the Hon. Secretary, Miss Pinckney.

Yours sincerely,
P. B. Haggitt,
Vicar. "

And underneath, a tear-off coupon read:

"I undertake to contribute ..... per month/or quarter/or year/ to the Merivale Parish Fund for Missions.

Signed ....."

There is truly nothing new under the sun!

Mind you, if a penny a week or month was little enough, so were incomes, as often as not. And, anyway, a penny went a long way, judging by the prices in Merivale and City shops in those days. C. E. Burrell, the "People's Photographers," of 11 Victoria Square, "does all kinds of photography, from Miniature to Life-size Cabinet from 10/6 per dozen. Post Card Photos from 5/- per dozen."
At the D. I. C., warm Union Shirts, collar attached, sold for 4/11, 5/6 and 6/11. One shilling discount was offered on every complete pound, cash payment.

Even as late as 1916, a quick telephone call was far from being an accepted way of doing business. E. Gibbard of 18 Kerr's Lane, off St. Albans Street, offered poultry; prime table chicken boiling fowls and young laying stock. "A postcard will receive prompt attention," his advertisement in the Parish Magazine promises.

Remembering that there was a war on in 1916, and recalling our own more recent experience of price fluctuations in times of shortage and national emergency, R. S. Cook of the Carlton Dispensary, corner of Bealey Avenue and Victoria Street, deserves a kind remembrance "Specially note this," he says in his advertisement in the May Parish Magazine, "that although prices of drugs have gone up tremendously, in most cases we have good stocks, so you can depend on our prices being largely the same as those existing previous to the war." This, after nearly two years of war!

H. Bromley, Family Butcher of 199 Papanui Road, waited daily on customers for orders. (How long is it since the butcher came for your order every day?) All meat, he assured his customers, was carted in "up-to-date, dust-proof waggons."

Sno-Wite Soap, sold by all grocers in St. Albans and Merivale, came in 4d. bars, and Bruce's were selling oat cakes and fruit cakes packed in tins for sending overseas. W. Strange Ltd., offered "Furnishing Bric-a-brac - a collection of useful articles in small furniture, all made in Strange's modern factory, and very suitable for presentation." The advertisement tells us that you could buy an oak secretaire desk from as little as 37/6, occasional tables from 12/6 and folding card tables from 21/-. Fern Leaf butter, fresh daily, sold at all groceries.

Transport was still largely horse-drawn, and Christchurch was well on its way to earning its subsequent nickname of "The Bicycle City." W. Gibson, the local coal merchant whose yard was on the corner of Office Road and Papanui Road, delivered by horse-drawn dray. John Cock of 12 Papanui Road, did a thriving trade in horse feed. J. Harris, Carrier, of 32 Andover Street, had waggons and a pantechnicon and teams of horses often to be seen working about the district. Hansom cabs and private vehicles had not quite given way to the motor car - although motor cars and lorries were becoming quite commonplace. Even aeroplanes passed overhead sometimes as pilots trained at Sockburn Aerodrome - later to be known as Wigram.

Some homes had a telephone, but it was not yet usual to see telephone numbers featured in advertisements. T. Cocks and Sons, Cabinet Makers of Victoria Street, had one - Number 2199; and R. S. Cook's Carlton Dispensary was listed as 448.

It was still a far cry from the days of unlimited credit in stores, and layby and terms were not yet part of the shopper's vocabulary. However, W. E. Male, Greengrocer of 201 Papanui Road cautiously advertised "Monthly Accounts with Approved Customers."

This then, was how things were done in Christchurch, and in Merivale in particular, in those early years of this Century; yet if there are marked differences to be seen between those times and the present, there is one thing which has changed very little; the number and type of activities with which a healthy, vigorous Parish occupies itself have always followed the familiar pattern.

Consider Sunday School. In December each year, probably from time almost immemorial, children

have gathered in their Parish Hall for the Annual Prizegiving, to receive their proper reward for a year of diligence and effort. The year 1917 was no exception, war or no war, and it provides yet another example of that phenomenon known to Sunday School Superintendents everywhere - the fact that girls are apt to take the lion's share of Sunday School honours. Again, the list reads like a Who's Who.
First Class, 95 per cent marks:
Olive Bascand, Nita Baty, Alywn Austin, Kathleen Joyce, Nina Perkins, Violet Legg, Mavis Baty, Lily Pearce, Ngaire McKechnie, Edna Pearce, Joan Shand, Lance Shand, Graham Parr, Freddie Rose, Thomas Taylor, Trevor Harris, Willie Parr, Mervin McKechnie, Grace Parr. You see? Fourteen girls, eight boys. The second class, 90 per cent marks, shows a rate of seven girls to two boys - and, incidentally, there's a very well-known name in that 90 per cent list; Olive Ault!

But that was in 1917. Many important events had occurred since the outbreak of war. In 1915, the Parish had acquired a new Curate, the Rev. D. Rankin, Archdeacon Gossett, now an elderly man in failing health, retired, and his place was taken by Archdeacon P. B. Haggitt. Mr. Rankin left Merivale to become Vicar of Oxford, and the Vestry recorded its appreciation of the services of Mr. A. Allen, who had been Vestryman and Superintendant of the Sunday School for the past 32 years!

In 1917, the old Vicarage was sold to Mr. Burton, and control of Church Lane was vested in the Christchurch City Council.
Mr. Wright's tender for the erection of the new Vicarage for £2, 268 was accepted, and Mr. England was appointed architect.

The current Curate, the Rev. W.H. Stych, resigned to go into camp in August.

In 1917, the Parish Magazine ceased publication because of the wartime shortage of paper. It was not to be revived for seventeen years. Emergency measures have a way of becoming permanent fixtures!

Then, in 1918, the war ended.

In 1919, the Rev. Harold Purchas was appointed Curate and Mr. E.H.S. Hamilton was elected to the Vestry, on which he was to serve for many years. In 1919, Harold Frank Ault, whose sister did so very well at Sunday School, became a student at Canterbury University College. At the same time, he undertook the task of teaching Bible Class.

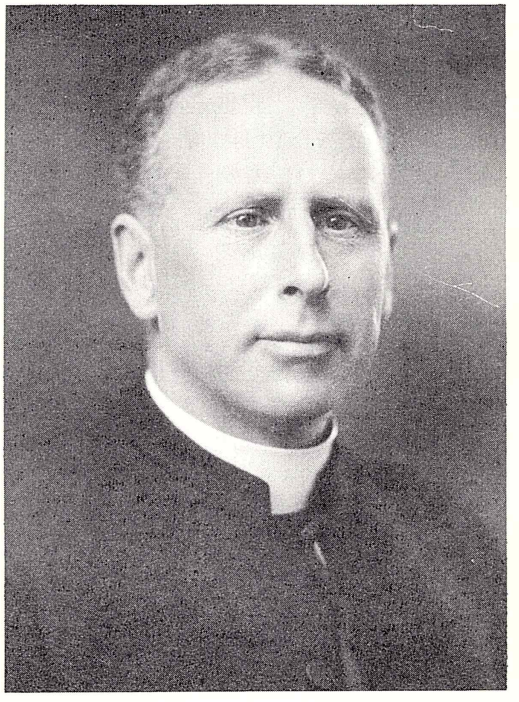
In 1920, Mr. Purchas left St. Mary's to become Vicar of Geraldine, and the Rev. J.R. Hervey was appointed Curate.

In 1921 the Parish was on the move in no uncertain manner. The number of Communicants at Easter Service was 413. The average offertory in those days was £19. 4. 3. Mr. Hervey left in that year to go to Malvern as Vicar.

Easter Day, 1924, saw a total of 525 Communicants, a record in the history of the Parish.

Perhaps it is not surprising, after all, that attendances were so good, St. Mary's for all its ups and downs, seems to have been singularly fortunate in having so many generations of so many faithful families living within and working for the Parish. The great thing about faithful families is, of course, the regular and constant renewal of the Parish work-force. In this respect, perhaps Merivale has been an "ideal" Parish; a constantly regenerated member of the Body of Christ.

You can see it in those recurring names in the lists of those who have served - and in the lists, also, of those who have gone forth to serve. This year, 1924, for example, saw Harold Frank Ault ordained as deacon. (He was ordained priest in 1926, and is today Vicar of Hinds.)



Archdeacon P. B. Haggitt.

But a building is not self-regenerating, and after nearly fifty-eight years, the old St. Mary's Church was beginning to show distinct signs of senility. Something had to be done, and soon.

The "Press," on the morning of Saturday, August 9th. 1924, reported to the City at large that something was indeed being done.
"NEW MERIVALE CHURCH" the headline read. "Collections being made."

The article under this headline sketched a brief history of the church, describing the efforts which had been made in recent years to replace the old building. "About sixteen years ago," it reported, "it was realised that the days of the old building were numbered, and a building fund was established. An active campaign for the collection of funds was commenced, but was soon interrupted by the outbreak of war, and it was not until five years ago that the canvass was re-started, to come to another stop because of the slump which shortly afterwards made itself felt in this country."

The Slump. It wasn't the first depression to affect the progress of St. Mary's. The 1870's and 1880's had

been hard years. But the remarkable thing is not that the Parish survived the slump, but that while conditions were still difficult, and pressures still acute, the parishioners somehow found the time and the wherewithall for a new building project.

The necessity for a new church was, in itself, a pressure. As the "Press" reported: "The time has now arrived .. when the parishioners are compelled to replace the present building, which cannot survive many more winters."
This was hardly an exaggeration. The old building was so dilapidated that on very wet Sundays, worshippers often sat in their pews with umbrellas up, because of the deluge from the leaky roof!

It is to their eternal credit that the parishioners took stock and decided which need was the greater; provision for present comfort or provision for future spiritual needs.
"An energetic band of canvassers has been enrolled," the "Press" reported, "and commenced operations about three weeks ago. Mr. Walcot Wood has been appointed Organising Secretary, and at a meeting of the collectors held last week he reported that since the new campaign was started, £1, 228 had been promised, of which £721. has been paid in cash payment, the balance being spread over the next three years. The Vestry now has available in cash and investments a total of £5, 608 towards the sum of £10, 000 ..."
It had been decided that £10, 000 must be in hand before the foundation stone could be laid.

Mr. Wilson, the architect of the new church, tabled a plan before the Vestry. The estimated cost was £22, 000 with a tower, or £17, 000 without, close to double the estimated cost in 1913!

In October, 1924, it was decided to proceed with the building of a new church - at a lower cost than the existing estimates. New plans were adopted for a church costing an estimated £13, 678, and the Building Committee was instructed to proceed without delay.

At last, the final plan by Mr. Edmund Wilson of Invercargill having been accepted, tenders were received once more, and the lowest, £10, 914, was accepted in 1925 - for a church without a tower.

Then in 1926, it was decided to have a tower, at a cost of £2, 533.
A financial statement in 1927 showed that the new church organ installation, etc., was to cost £20, 126, of which all but £1, 290. 10s. was in hand; and even this last amount had been promised.

On the 21st. February, 1926, the foundation stone for the new church was laid by Archdeacon Haggitt. The ceremony was conducted by Dean Carrington, the Archbishop's Commissary. The Church Property Trustees were represented by Mr. W. C. Bean, and many other notable people were present including the People's Warden, Mr. E. H. S. Hamilton, the Rev. J. R. Hervey, Curate, Mr. H. D. Andrews, Chancellor of the Diocese, Canon J. de B. Galwey, Dean Harper, Sir R. Heaton Rhodes and Lady Rhodes.

The stone itself is of Bluff granite, and is inscribed: "To the Glory of God, and in the Faith of Jesus Christ, this stone was laid on the 21st day of February, 1926, A. D."

Under the stone is a copy of the Service, a copy of the Parish leaflet and a statement including the names of the Architect, Mr. E. Wilson, of Messrs. Collins and Harman, supervising architects and the Contractors, Messrs. J. and W. Jamieson. The statement also contains a message of greeting to whoever may, at some time in the future, read it.

After the ceremony, the Churchwardens were given the wonderfully welcome news that the Rhodes family would provide the funds for building the tower.

Another fine example of the kind of generosity which helped surmount difficulties would be that of Mr. William Jamieson, of J. & W. Jamieson, Builders. He did all the panelling work at his own expense after the Vestry had said they couldn't afford it. He "thought it a pity that such a fine church should forego panelling on the score of expense."

The building proceeded fairly slowly, for this was no timber structure. It was to be a building of concrete and hewn stone, built to outlast the years, and it was to be big enough to seat about 500 people.

Day by day, Archdeacon Haggitt watched it grow. Mr. Clarence Turner, ex-Organist in the old church, paid a visit from Wellington to his old home, "Fassifern," and came to see the new building. He admired it, but he went into the old building and sat there quietly for some hours, remembering and, he later confessed, slightly regretting its imminent passing. He was not altogether enthusiastic about the beauty of the new structure, but this is hardly surprising. Not that he disapproved. It was merely that his strongest feeling was one of nostalgia, and it is difficult, on top of this, to be enthusiastic about a building which, after all, is unfinished and still girt about with scaffolding, concrete mixers and mud.

And then, suddenly, it was finished. The builders' gear had been cleared away; the heaps of plaster and shingle, the stacks of timber and plasterers' buckets and wheelbarrows and block-and-tackle slings, had all been removed. The ground was somewhat raw, inclined to muddiness, with the grass bruised and trampled, but it didn't matter. The main door opened directly onto the footpath in Church Lane, and there was no question of the congregation having to walk in mud in the event of rain on the Consecration Day.

But it didn't rain on the great day, as it happened. Mrs. Edwin Hamilton, who was present on that exciting day, and whose husband, with Mr. J. G. L. Vernon, was a Churchwarden, has described the Service.

"It was a lovely, fine day," she writes, "for the Service of Consecration of the Church of St. Mary, Merivale, by Bishop West-Watson, and a large congregation of clergy, parishioners past and present, and well-wishers filled the church to overflowing for that wonderful and memorable Service."

The day was also notable for a small, intense drama, of which the bulk of the congregation was unaware. Mrs. Hamilton recalls that the Bishop had warned that every penny for the building must be in the Bank before

he could consecrate the building. But on that Saturday morning, with the Service Form printed and all else in readiness for the Service at 3 o'clock that afternoon, a few hundred pounds were still outstanding!

In 1927, offices and Banks were open for business on Saturday mornings, and both Wardens were in their respective offices. As the morning wore on, and the two men became more and more anxious, Mr. Vernon would pick up his telephone every few minutes and call Mr. Hamilton.
"Edwin," he would say, "has that money come in yet?"
"No, Jack," would be the reply.

Eleven o'clock came, and half past eleven. Still the money was not in.
"What are we going to do?" Mr. Vernon asked worriedly.
Mr. Hamilton had no answer to give him.

A quarter to twelve - and still no money. The Banks would close at twelve o'clock.

Then, at five minutes to twelve the final cheque arrived, there was just time for Mr. Hamilton to dash across Hereford Street and deposit the money before the Bank closed its doors. The new church was paid for, debt-free; but it had been a close call.

Promptly at 3 o'clock, with the congregation seated, Bishop West-Watson knocked on the closed doors and called:
"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."
The Vicar, from inside the church, asked: "Who is the King of Glory?"
"The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory," the Bishop replied, and in accordance with ancient practice, his reply was the "key" which opened the door to him.

The People's Warden now handed the Bishop a petition for Consecration of the Church, saying: "Right Reverend Father in God, we pray you to consecrate this Church."
"I am ready to proceed with the Consecration," the Bishop replied.

The People's Warden delivered the key of the church to the Bishop, and the Vicar, with the Churchwardens walking ahead, led him to the western end of the aisle.
"The Lord be with you," the Bishop said. It was at once a greeting and a benediction.
"And with thy spirit," the people responded.
"We beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously enter Thy House," The Bishop prayed, "and within the hearts of Thy faithful people establish for Thyself an everlasting habitation that they may be glorified by the indwelling of Him by Whose building they live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."
Then he said: "Peace be unto this House and all that worship in it. Peace be unto those that enter and to those that go out from it. Peace be unto those that love it and that love the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord."

The procession of Wardens and Clergy now passed up the aisle, while the congregation sang Psalm 122 - "I was glad when they said unto me: We will go into the house of the Lord ... "

The lovely service continued, moving in its simplicity and almost awesome in its completeness. At the Font, the Bishop said: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin ..." "But alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" the congregation responded triumphantly.
"Bless this Font, O Lord," the Bishop then prayed, "which we now dedicate to Thy Service, and grant that they who are here baptised into the death of Thy Son, may be partakers of His glorious resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord."
At the Chancel steps, the Bishop requested: "Give Thy blessing, O Lord, to all who shall be confirmed in this place ..." And again: "Sanctify, O Lord, and bless those who shall here be joined together in Holy Marriage, that they may please Thee both in will and deed, and live together in holy love unto their lives' end. Amen."

Blessings were pronounced at the Lectern, the Pulpit, the Organ and Choir Stalls; and at the Sanctuary steps the Bishop said: "Be gracious, O Lord, to all those who in this place shall receive the sacred mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, that they who see Thee now by faith may, after this life, have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

And at last, Bishop West-Watson could pronounce: "By virtue of our sacred office in the Church of God, we do now declare to be consecrate, and for ever set apart from all profane and common uses, this House of God, under the dedication of the Church of St. Mary in Merivale, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

After this moving Service, the visiting clergy and their wives were invited to take afternoon tea in the Schoolroom, and Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Hamilton provided for, and expected, about fifty guests.
"To our surprise," as Mrs. Hamilton now mildly puts it, "the entire congregation poured into the Schoolroom for cups of tea!" The biscuits and cakes disappeared rapidly, and the "five thousand" even demolished a large iced cake which had been made for a supper party to be held the following evening in honour of the architect and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Wilson, who were staying with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton for the celebrations.

After the parishioners and visitors had left the church, Mr. Wilson took Mrs. Hamilton inside with him to test the acoustics. Standing in the Sanctuary while Mrs. Hamilton stood by the Font, Mr. Wilson called:
"I'm going to drop a pin."
Back came the reply.
"You dropped two pins," Mrs. Hamilton said with certainty, so he had. The acoustics were obviously very good indeed.

And so the old church passed and the new began its work. Perhaps the last time the old church was used was on that day, August 6th 1927, when visiting clergy and the Choir robed in its vestries for the Consecration Service.

Soon afterwards, the old wooden church, which had seen so much of fair weather and foul, and which had served and been served by so many faithful men and women, was demolished. Its Font is all that remains where it stood, a reminder of perseverance and a mighty faith.

But the new was the embodiment of a glorious vision.

. . . and the house which I build is great

In 1928, at the Annual General Meeting, Archdeacon Haggitt expressed the thankfulness of the Parish for the new church. His heart must have been very full, for he had laboured and dreamed and hoped and prayed for so many years; and now it stood there, and resounded week by week with the praises of the people who had deserved it so well.

But there was no time to sit back and admire it. The world was not sitting back. A new wave of materialism, of which symptoms were neglect of worship and apathy about religion, had to be challenged. This lovely new church was here for a purpose, as the old church had been. It was the centre and heart from which the Word of God was sent forth, and to which the faithful could come, Sunday by Sunday, to worship. And so its work began.

In 1930, the Rev. J. Rich became Assistant Curate, but he did not remain at St. Mary's for very long. In September 1931 he went to Fairlie as Vicar and Canon Staples Hamilton agreed to act in his place.

And in that month, three years later, Archdeacon Haggitt himself left St. Mary's, resigning his charge the Parish to go to the Cathedral Parish of Nelson after 19 years at St. Mary's. The 27th of September, the day on which he tendered his resignation, was a sad day for St. Mary's, for he had shared so much with his congregation, working with and for them in bad times and good, and so much progress, including the new church itself, was in large measure due to his faith and perseverance.

Perhaps in view of the stature of Archdeacon Haggitt, St. Mary's was doubly fortunate in obtaining the services of the Rev. A. K. Warren, who came to the Parish on 21st December, 1934.

Mr. Warren was fully as energetic as any of his predecessors. Early in 1935, he announced that he had arranged for a Church Army Mission to the Parish. A month later, he had revived the Parish Magazine, which had been defunct since 1917. The Magazine, he announced, was to be free of cost provided that half its space was allotted to advertising and the Parish guaranteed to distribute 1, 000 copies.

So greatly did the work of the Parish increase that in 1935, the Rev. M. H. Wybert was appointed Curate in addition to Canon Staples Hamilton who was already holding an appointment as Assistant to Mr. Warren.

In 1935, the Parish received a welcome but totally unexpected visit from Lord and Lady Bledisloe, the greatly beloved Governor General and his Lady. This was their second visit to St. Mary's. The first visit must have impressed them quite powerfully, for they were quick to notice changes, such as new hangings, new choir robes and alterations to the choir stalls.

In 1936, Mr. Warren went to England, taking with him the green altar frontal to have improvements made on it which could not be done in New Zealand. He returned later in the year, bringing with him a block of stone from the nave of the historic Church of Our Ladie, in Warwickshire, and in March of the following year, the stone was set in the porch of St. Mary's, with a small ceremony to mark the occasion.

In April, 1937, Mr. Warren was appointed Archdeacon of Christchurch.

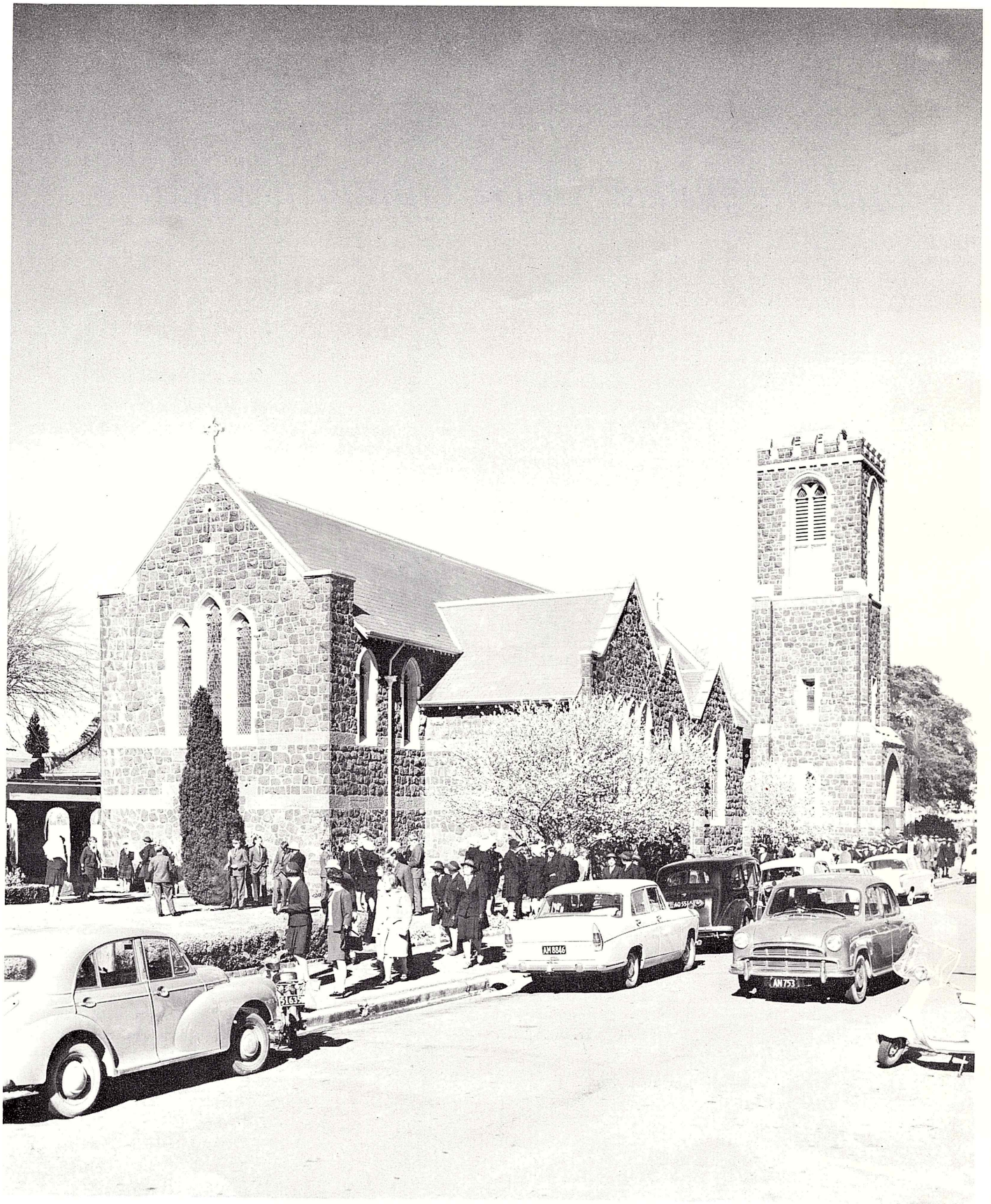
The Annual Report of May 16th 1938, shows the affairs of the Parish to be in an extremely healthy state. The sponsors of the Parish Magazine had little to worry about as far as circulation went, for the same report mentions that 1, 250 copies were delivered monthly!

In August, 1938, Mr. Wybert left the Parish, his place being taken by the Rev. M. L. Wiggins, who was to leave Merivale in 1941 to become Vicar of Oxford, and who, eighteen years later, was to become assistant Bishop of Tanganyika. Bishop Wiggins made history by becoming first Bishop of the new Diocese of Victoria Nyanza in 1963.

In September 1938, the May's Road Sunday School opened. The roll numbered 15, who met in a brick garage with a red felt carpet to take the chill from the concrete floor, with little chairs and a kerosene heater for the cold weather.

In 1939, war was declared against Germany once again.

There's no need to dwell on the part played by the Parish in the war effort. The pattern is familiar to anyone over the age of forty. There's almost a holiday air of excitement at first, a sort of patriotic fervour in technicolour, as committees are formed, sewing groups, knitting circles, bandage-rolling groups, Red Cross activities and Volunteers for Service Clubs and cake-packing and the making up of patriotic parcels, all swing into action. The built-up tensions are over,



St. Mary's, Merivale, 1966.

the die has been cast and everyone knows exactly where we're going.

But as it drags on through one year, two, three, four years with no end in sight; as rationing is felt as it was never felt in New Zealand in 1914-18; as those same Parish names appear beneath interminable pages of little photographs in the "Free Lance"or the"Weekly News," and in the lists in the daily papers, there is little sign of that first fervour. There is simply a grim determination, and perhaps a quiet intensity in prayer.

This time there were new names, as well, for Merivale was much as it is now, settled fairly densely, with attractive new homes built on many of the old sections, which had been subdivided. But the pattern was similar in many ways. No horse-drawn traffic as in 1914-18, but trams, a few cars, used sparingly, a number of vehicles with gas-producers mounted on them, and clouds of bicycles. Horses were not quite ousted, as yet. Milk still came in horse-drawn wagons. City Council drays could still be seen, great sagacious beasts patiently standing between the shafts, or moving unguided, at a word of command, as their drivers plied shovel and broom to clean the autumn leaves from the gutters and paths.

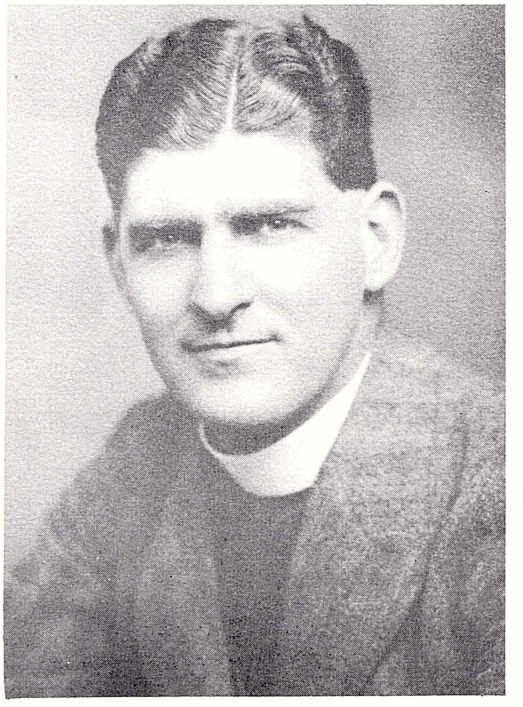
Aeroplanes were rather more plentiful, of course. The City had become accustomed to see the Dragons and Dragonflies and Dominies and Lockheed Electras of Union Airways. Gipsy Moths and various small monoplanes were not unfamiliar. Wigram, since 1937, had housed Tiger Moths, Baffin, Vildebeeste and Vincent bombers - great bi-planes with softly thunderous engines and a sort of slow dignity in flight. But now new aeroplanes were being seen in increasing numbers. The British Airspeed Oxford, a small, twin-engined aircraft, was seen over the City at all hours. Tiger Moths, neat little yellow-coloured bi-planes, rose and sank over Harewood. Disproportionately noisy, yellow-painted North American Harvards droned like tired and dyspeptic blowflies. And, once in a while, aeroplanes came back from the Pacific fighting fronts; sleek, shark-like Kittyhawks and lean, grey Venturas visited Wigram. Once, an enormous black Lancaster, one of the aircraft types engaged in thousand-bomber and dam-busting raids in Europe, flew low over the city.

There were far more uniforms in evidence than there had been twenty-five years before, because there were great training camps quite close to Christchurch, and special troop trains often carried whole reinforcements to Lyttelton, on their way to North Island ports.

On Sunday 14th January, 1942, the Governor General, Sir Cyril Newell and Lady Newell, and his aide-de-camp Captain Heathcote Helmore, attended Matins at St. Mary's, and the Governor General read a Lesson. He afterwards expressed his appreciation of the Service and of the beauty of the church.

St. Mary's Parish concerned itself with many facets and phases of the war which had not touched it during the 1914-18 period. Perhaps it was because, with war in the Pacific, there was an even greater sense of active participation on the home front. At all events, Chaplains home on leave from places like Guadalcanal, or from New Zealand training camps, readily gave interviews to Parish or diocesan representatives, speaking frankly on the work the Church was doing amongst the troops and, equally frankly, on the visible effect that work was having.

That there was value in this is shown by the fact that St. Mary's draw certain conclusions from the information thus gained, and from its own observations, and by 1944, the question of rehabilitation was being discussed at Parish level. C.E.M.S. was being reorganised at this time, and its first task was to provide some means of bringing back returned men to the Church. One such means was the Fellowship of Marriage, an organisation for young married women.



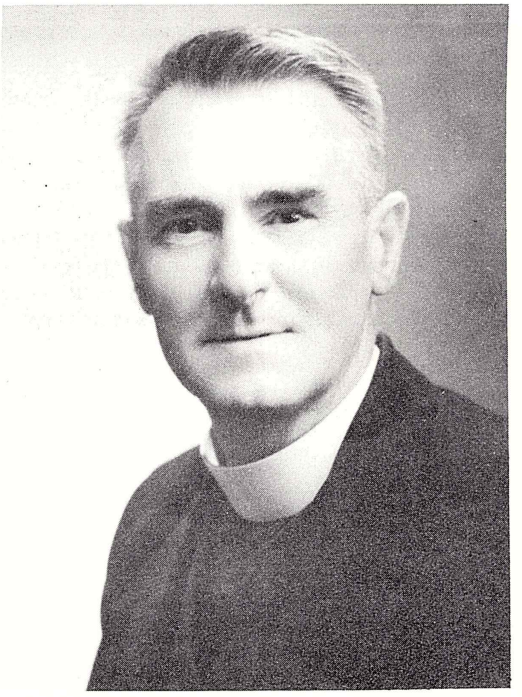
Archdeacon A.K. Warren.

The Church realised that, in many cases, these women had husbands overseas, and were very much tied down by the responsibilities of single-handed management of homes and children. By providing a means whereby these young women could keep in touch with their church, it was hoped to reach their husbands when they returned, and so bring them, too, within the sphere of Church influence,and to pursuade them to join or rejoin Church organisations.

As Archdeacon Petrie said in 1943,it behoved the Parish to make these things very much its business.Otherwise he said, the same lassitude and long-denied desire for ease and comfort and rest from struggle could lead all too soon to another, even greater war.

Archdeacon A.J. Petrie had come to St. Mary's in 1940, when Archdeacon Warren resigned to become Dean of Christchurch and, subsequently Chaplain to the Forces. Archdeacon Petrie was a fine man and one who worked and planned with a breadth of vision which gave much of the work he began a momentum resulting in lasting and widely-felt value.

The world which emerged from the six-year struggle was scarcely less changed than that which had arisen



Archdeacon A. J. Petrie.

from the four appalling years of World War 1. One thing was certain. There was no question of immediate taking of ease. Britain had been bled white. She stood victorious, but at a cost which left her weak and reeling; and the more fortunate countries, those parts of the Empire which had not suffered at first hand the full impact of war, continued to aid her, as they had done throughout the years of war.

St. Mary's, in common with Parishes throughout the country, set to work to pack and despatch Bundles for Britain. Rationing was still in force; butter was spread lightly, with extreme care, and cream was rarely seen. Petrol, too, was rationed and cars could still be seen occasionally with gas-producing burners mounted on them. Austerity remained the rule while we shared our comparative abundance with Britain.

In 1947, Mr. A. D. Hewson, replaced Mr. Worsley as Organist. Mr. Worsley had been Organist at St. Mary's since 1929. He had given some fifty-three years of service to the world of professional music, and his retirement was well earned.
In this same year, Rev. E. O. E. Hill replaced the Assistant Curate, Rev. E. C. W. Powell.

In August, 1947, Archdeacon Petrie died, and it was announced soon afterwards that he would be replaced by the Rev. C. L. Mountfort, who was instituted in January, 1948 as Vicar of Merivale and Archdeacon of Akaroa and Ashburton. He introduced a Children's Service, held at 10 o'clock each Sunday; and, noticing a tendency towards decrease in revenue, cast about for means of effecting an improvement in this area.

Such a decrease was not surprising at this time. Many returned servicemen were building homes. Money, therefore, was tight. For all that, it was not especially short, by comparison with, for example, the late 1920's. And the late 1920's had been the time when St. Mary's new church had been built. So, the Vicar probably reasoned, there was no real reason for a shortage of revenue now. The answer probably lay in budgetting. With this in mind, an envelope system was instituted in April or May of 1948, and some improvement seems to have been noted. Another innovation was a Men's Service on the second Sunday of each month. At this time, too, an appeal was started for funds to improve and extend the Parish Hall.

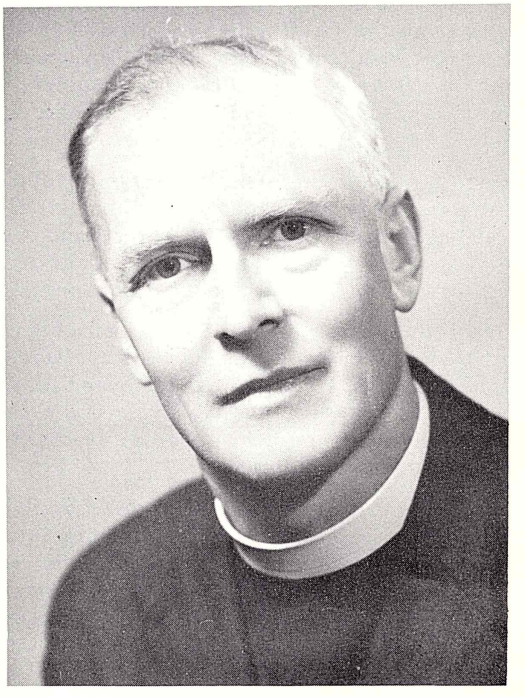
Actually the Children's Service got off to a bad start not because of any lack of willingness on the part of the children, but because a polio epidemic prevented them from coming.
Another activity begun this year was the Social Hour after church.

The south transept was converted into a chapel in 1948, and a Children's Page was begun in the Parish Magazine.

But building activities and necessary repairs and alterations had placed a strain on the budget, and there were constantly increasing difficulties once again over finance. Archdeacon Mountfort, as a counter-measure, initiated an Annual Day of Giving, to be held in November each year.

In 1949, Mr. Hill went to Southbridge as Vicar, and in May Deaconess O. B. Ault joined the staff, having been ordained Deaconess on 21st December, 1941.

Deaconess Ault is the worthy successor to a number of capable women workers on the St. Mary's staff. The first was Sister Margaret of the Community of the Sacred Name, who served St. Mary's and St. Matthew's jointly from 1906. She was followed by Miss Jessie Sewell, 1932-43 who, along with Deaconess Ault trained at St. Faith's House of Sacred Learning, at one time situated in Webb Street; Sister Ailsa



Archdeacon C. L. Mountfort.

Cranswick, Church Army, 1944-46; Sister Doris Campbell, 1946-47.

For many years, until this time, Canon Staples Hamilton had been doing regular work in the Parish, but in 1949, at the age of 90, he felt that he could no longer carry on.

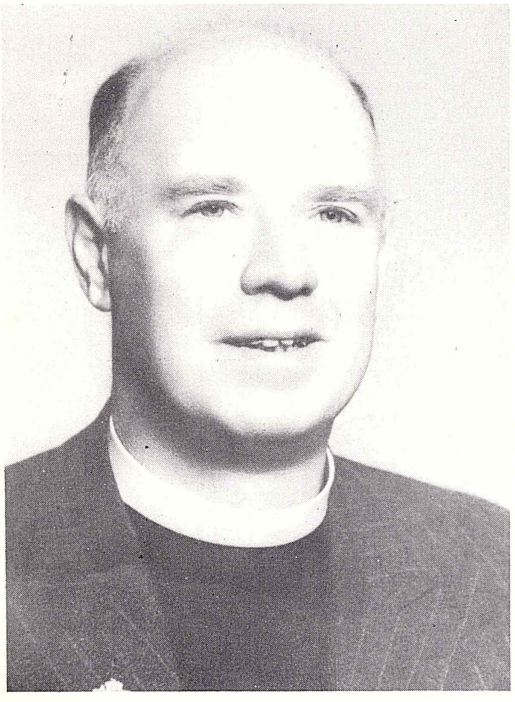
In 1950, Mr. Hewson relinquished his post as Organist, and his place was taken by Mr. E. R. Field-Dodgson, now Organist and music master at Christ's College.

Also in 1950, a chime of eight bells was presented to the Parish, and was dedicated by Archdeacon Mountfort at Evensong on December 26th, the ringer on that occasion being Mr. G. H. Claydon. Mr. Claydon later trained some of the young people of the Parish, and the St. Mary's Bellringers' Guild was formed.

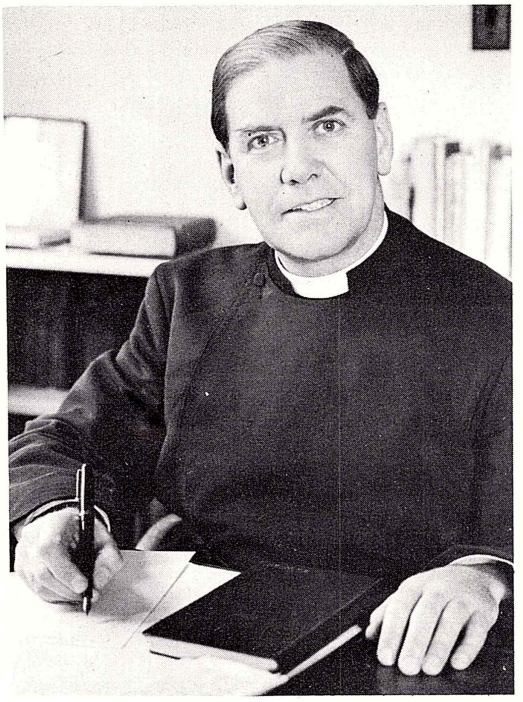
In 1951, Rev. T. A. McKenzie was appointed Assistant Curate, and Mr. E. H. S. Hamilton, active Vestryman and Churchwarden for 31 years, declined re-election to the Vestry. His decision was regretted greatly, but everyone agreed that he had more than earned a rest, for he had worked extremely hard for the Parish.

In 1952, perhaps a sign of the changing times could be discerned in the fact that the Vestry was broken into, and a small amount of money stolen and a considerable amount of wanton damage done. The police were notified - the first time anything of the kind had ever occurred in St. Mary's, Merivale.

In this year, Mr. Field-Dodgson left, and Mr. Philip Bornet, who had been brought out from England for the purpose, became Organist of St. Mary's. He was to serve as Organist for twelve years, and when ill health caused his retirement Murray Carr filled the position for six months and was followed by the Rev. A. D. Hewson. Today, with the number of services every Sunday, the duty of Organist is shared between Mr. Hewson and Mr. Paul Ellis.



Archdeacon W. W. Averill.



Archdeacon E. A. Gowing.

In 1953, Mr. McKenzie left, and was replaced by Rev. M. D. S. Cocks. Then, after nearly five years of service to the people of St. Mary's, Merivale, Archdeacon Mountfort resigned his charge of the Parish, and it was announced by the Board of Nominators that Archdeacon W. W. Averill would succeed him as Vicar of St. Mary's.

In 1954, the Men's Fellowship was formed, beginning a great record of work and achievement. Much work has been done by them in the church grounds, planting and tidying; and they have widened the scope of their activities to reach out beyond the Parish boundaries, helping other parishes with appeals and canvasses, and visiting patients each week at Burwood Hospital.

In July, plans were made for remodelling the kitchen in the Parish Hall and the purchasing of a film projector. In August, microphones and earphones were installed in the Church for the hard of hearing and, since the carpets were beginning to show signs of wear and tear, an appeal was launched at a special meeting, to raise the sum of £300 for replacement of floor coverings.

In November a new scheme was launched. There was to be an annual fair, at which all Parish organisations were to be responsible for providing and stocking a stall. This was to be held each March.

In 1955, a new carpet was laid in the nave. The first March Fair raised £366 - for the kitchen alterations, and this money, plus £63 granted by the Vestry and funds already in hand, met the cost of this work.

In November, Archdeacon Averill died, and Rev. D. M. Taylor and, later, Canon A. C. T. Purchas, ministered to the Parish until a new appointment could be made.

In 1956, Mr. Cocks left the Parish to become Assistant Curate of Geraldine, and the Rev. Ross Eaton was appointed Assistant Curate in his place. In July, Archdeacon Gowing was installed as Vicar of St. Mary's.

Archdeacon Gowing came to St. Mary's at a time when finances were again strained, and the Parish was not making the kind of progress that it had made in other years. The Vestry, with the vision that has characterised St. Mary's Vestries throughout the history of the Parish, had looked into the problem and discerned the basic need - Christian Stewardship.

At the first Vestry meeting at which Archdeacon Gowing presided, it was suggested that the Wells Organisation, a professional fund-raising organisation, be commissioned to put Parish Stewardship on a proper business footing. The Wells Organisation was new to New Zealand at this time, and few knew very much about it. It was known that the Organisation had been highly successful in other parishes, but there was some doubt as to the wisdom of calling in a frankly commercial organisation to manage what was basically a spiritual business - the business of "how much should I give to God?"

Nothing was done about contacting the Organisation pending further enquiries, until in November it was decided to invite the Wells Organisation to conduct an appeal, subject to certain conditions which would overcome such doubts as the Vestrymen might still entertain. However, the Wells Organisation could not agree to act conditionally, and the matter was dropped for the time being.

In February, 1957, it was resolved that plans be prepared for much-needed extensions to the Parish buildings, a project which, however necessary, was going to be expensive. Clearly, the Parish finances had to be placed on a firm footing, and ways and means of achieving this were discussed.

Then, on June 25th, a special Meeting of Parishioners was convened to discuss the Wells Organisation. The meeting decided almost unanimously to call in the Wells people; and this, in the circumstances, was a wise move, since results were guaranteed.

The canvass conducted by their Organisation was a tremendous success, for it not only raised immediately -needed financial and other support, but also made it possible to budget soundly and wisely, and to set aside money for future foreseeable needs.

In 1958, a Toy Service at Christmas was instituted, at which used toys were brought by children for the Christmas Tree, for distribution to less fortunate people. In this year, also, the Twenty-plus Group was formed.

Mr. Eaton went overseas in 1959, and was replaced by Rev. J. F. B. Keith. In March of this year, Parish Visitors were commissioned as part of the Christian Stewardship principle, and a Guest Night Service was held in August, regular attenders being invited to bring friends and neighbours who were not regular churchgoers.

In 1960, as a result of the new sense of stewardship and the lively participation in Parish projects, the Vestry could announce that the Special Fund raised over the last three years now amounted to £48, 000! Of this, £15, 000 was paid into the Building Fund for the Sunday School, £4, 500 was paid to the Diocese for Extension Work and £1, 500 was given for missionary work.

During the year, Archdeacon Gowing was appointed Bishop of Auckland. Mr. Keith left to become Vicar of Phillipstown, and the Rev. J. Evans came to replace him.

And then, in 1960, Archdeacon S. E. Woods came to St. Mary's as Vicar.

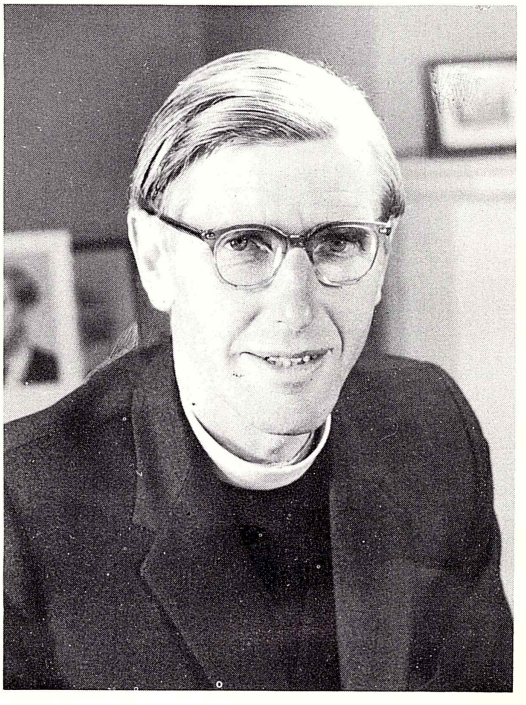
Much has happened since then, in the Parish of St. Mary, Merivale. The Diocese had initiated the Mission idea as a means of generating fresh enthusiasm and St. Mary's, in common with other parishes, had seen the need to support this new activity. This was the prime move behind the adoption of the Wells Organisation canvass.

This 1957 Wells Canvass brought forth a new concept of Christian Stewardship, built around a system of planned giving. It taught the Parish how to organise and how to provide for its own needs and the needs of others; and, better still, it taught how to make the most of available resources of treasure, time and talents.

Out of it grew the St. Mary's Continuation Committee, for it was seen that, however effective the Campaign might be, it must not be allowed to quietly die.. The forward movement must go on, and momentum must not be lost. This Committee, which has been chaired since its inception by Mr. Colin Hart, has maintained an effective working strength of six to eight, many of whom have served continuously since 1957.

Its principal function is, as its name implies, to see that the work goes on, and that enthusiasm doesn't flag, and to this end they contact new arrivals, and keep a close watch on the life and health of the Parish.

There is the financial aspect of Stewardship to be organised and chanelled, and this is no small task. In a three-year period, some £15, 121 was spent as St. Mary's share of the wider work of the Church beyond the Parish confines, for Church Extension within the Diocese, for Overseas Missions and as gifts to other



Archdeacon S. E. Woods.

Christian Organisations. In the same period, £26,586 was spent on stipends and essential Parish works and maintenance. The Wells Organisation brought to St. Mary's a system of effective stewardship, and if all this work is to go on, this money and more must be found year by year.

But there is another facet of the work of the Continuation Committee which should not be forgotten. Mere maintenance of the system was not, obviously, going to be a satisfactory way of keeping the Parish vitally alive. In fact, maintaining that spirit which the 1957 campaign had aroused so effectively would have proved impossible; for some of the people caught up in the new enthusiasm generated by that campaign have now moved from the Parish, and many people who were not affected by that campaign have come to live in the Parish. A Parish is not a static thing, after all.

Obviously, the only way to keep this forward momentum was to give the Parish another "booster shot," and this was recommended to the Vicar and Vestry by the Continuation Committee. This was to take place in 1960, just three years after the original Campaign, and it was to be known, appropriately as "St. Mary's Onward, 1960-63." The Vicar at that time, Archdeacon Gowing, wrote: "I am utterly convinced that all who love St. Mary's and the things for which it stands will agree wholeheartedly that we can't go back to the old days and the old ways. The only way to progress is further effort ..."

That this was indeed a progressive effort soon became obvious. It was not merely to be a repetition of the first Campaign, but was to be something quite new. To be sure, it took the Wells system as its pattern, using the best of the Wells ideas and building on them with a broader concept of Christian Stewardship which emphasised equally Time, Talents and Money, and sought to bring home to the lay members of the Parish the fact that the continued life and health of the Church depended on them.

Archdeacon Gowing shortly afterwards left St. Mary's to become Bishop of Auckland, and Archdeacon Woods came to St. Mary's. It was Archdeacon Woods who, hearing of the fine work being done in Australia by the Rev. Tony Bagnall, brought him to St. Mary's in 1962 to conduct a Parish Life Mission.

This Mission was to be of great benefit to the Parish. In essence, it was a period of intense self-examination. The Parish was made to look at itself, to examine and ruthlessly criticise every aspect of its own life. As a result, it saw in itself strengths which were not being put to fullest use, and weaknesses which were tending to undermine its own best efforts. Immediately, steps were taken to remedy shortcomings and to make better use of resources.

The Rev. Tony Bagnall's Parish Life Mission was followed, in April and May of 1963 by a Mission conducted by the Very Rev. Walter Hurst. In contrast to - or perhaps complementary to - the Parish Life Mission, this new Mission was outlooking. On the theme of "Christ's Religion, the Answer the World so Desperately needs," it taught the Parish to take those qualities and strengths which it had learned to discover and improve in itself, and to apply them to the needs of the Parish and the world at large. Out of it grew the concept of Outreach, extending the hand of fellowship to all who would take it, and bringing home to all parishioners the fact that they are needed: that they are, in fact, the Church.

Hard on the heels of this Mission came the second "Booster Shot," a new campaign called "St. Mary's Forward in Faith." This campaign was broadened in its scope and in its application by the enriching lessons of the Missions which preceded it. Archdeacon Woods wrote: "It has been a joy to share with you during these last three years in what I feel has been a real Onward movement throughout our Parish. This has been possible through the faithful acceptance of the principles of Christian Stewardship by many of our people, who have given willingly, freely, generously and, in some cases, sacrificially not only of their money, but also of their time and talents. They have indeed lived out the prayer in our Holy Communion Service - 'and here we offer and present unto Thee O Lord ourselves, our souls and bodies ...'"

In 1965, two years after the Forward in Faith Campaign, Father Geoffrey's Franciscan Mission was a logical next step forward from the teaching of the Rev. Tony Bagnall and the Very Rev. Walter Hurst. Father Geoffrey, of the Anglican Society of St. Francis, laid down several conditions for the conduct of his Mission. Most notable amongst these was that the Parish must be fully prepared, in the way he laid down, to receive the teaching he had to offer. The main phase of this preparation consisted of Operation Handshake, in which members of the Parish had to be called upon three times by visiting teams - and this gave birth to a new and even wider sense of Christian Stewardship, resulting in activities such as the Lay Visiting Committee.

It should be mentioned at this point that the Wells Campaign taught the need for,amongst other things, a Parish Secretary. Subsequent missions and canvasses were able to function smoothly because of this addition to the Parish staff; and today much day by day routine work in the keeping of Parish records and other activities depends heavily on the Parish Secretary, Mrs. V.E. Dennis.

The Lay Visiting Committee is yet another expression of the growing concept of Stewardship. When a new family comes to live in Merivale, the Parish is informed - usually by the Magazine deliverer in that area, or by a neighbour, or by a telephone call or an entry in the book in the church porch, made by the newcomer himself. A Visitor calls on the newcomer, welcomes the family to the Parish, and sets out to make friends. Whatever is learnt of the family that can be of help in integrating them with the Parish is later noted down; details such as their interests can reveal a desire to be associated with one or another of the Parish organisations. Thus the first contact is not a "What can you do for us?" query, but a "Welcome to St. Mary's, and what can we do for you?" approach.

Already it is proving so effective that in recent months, gains in all aspects of Parish life exceed losses. In an area which is changing rapidly from owner/residential to flatter/residential, this is a tremendous thing. The Parish has grown, changed, evolved from the

simple, semi-rural community of the eighteen-sixties, and life itself is more complex than it was in the days of the Parish beginnings.

Parish Communion Service, 1966.

Just consider for a moment the approximate capital value of Parish properties - some £152,000. This must be taken care of in a businesslike and adequate manner because while it must not be thought that Stewardship is concerned merely with the maintenance of property it should be remembered that property is the Plant with which the Church works - with which the Clergy and Laity work - to foster and spread Christianity and to glorify God.

The Ideal of the Clergy and Laity working together was surely uppermost in the minds of Archdeacon Gowing and his Assistant, the Rev. Warren Limbrick, as they launched their campaign in 1960. Archdeacon Woods, and a succession of equally dedicated Assistants, hard-working men like the Rev. John Denny, the Rev. John Barker, the Rev. Henry Takens and the Rev. Alan Hewson, have toiled towards the same end.

Indeed, Archdeacon Woods must have regarded the development of the Stewardship ideal as a tremendously encouraging manifestation of the Holy Spirit at work. His own pastoral concern for his flock has been evident in the way in which he has consistantly tried to make the services more meaningful, with such innovations as the Parish Communion, where the bread and wine are brought to the altar by a Parish family, while other members of the congregation read the Epistle and lead the biddings.

As Vicar of St. Mary's, Merivale, and Chaplain to St. Margaret's College, the Vicar is a busy man but, following in the tradition of St. Mary's Vicars, he still seems to find time for a large number of activities within and outside of the Parish.

St. Mary's, incidentally, must be unique in the number of colleges it serves. (St. Margaret's, being an Anglican School, is especially connected with St. Mary's, although this was not always so. In days gone by, when girls were boarded in school hostels along Bealey Avenue, they used to attend St. Luke's and the Cathedral.) St. Andrew's and Rangi-Ruru, both Presbyterian Schools, send strong Anglican contingents to St. Mary's Sunday by Sunday as does Acland House, the Christchurch Girls' High School boarding hostel; and Selwyn House the P.N.E.U. School on Papanui Road, also sends its boarders to St. Mary's. The Anglican Boarders of these schools are ministered to in many ways by St. Mary's clergy. There are Confirmation Classes to arrange each year, Bible Classes, Confirmation Guides to be organised and a hundred and one other activities connected with their spiritual welfare to see to.

Another activity for which Archdeacon Woods finds time is his ministry to elderly people who are unable to leave their homes. These folk could so easily be left behind. It would be easy for the Church to go on its way, leaving them out of its activities, letting them drop out of its fellowship, abandoning them, depriving them of their Communion. But the Vicar will not let them be forgotten; and sixty or seventy elderly or sick folk receive Holy Communion in their homes once a month.

There is so much to be done. This is the reason why the concept of the Church's ministry must broaden, and why the old idea of a Minister serving a parish has had to develop into - or perhaps return to - the ideal of the entire Christian body being vitally alive, aware of its functions and tasks and working as a united Clergy-Laity team. This is the shaping force behind the Parish of St. Mary, Merivale; and perhaps this is as God means it to be. The life and work of the young Parish was simple. Now it becomes increasingly complex, with wider responsibilities and greater loads to carry; but it has a hundred years of growth, experience and blessing to fit it for its greater tasks.

Present members of the Staff and Wardens:-

Front Row:- Deaconess O. B. Ault,
Archdeacon S. E. Woods,
Mrs. V. E. Dennis, Parish Secretary.

Back Row:- Mr. P. V. Ellis, Assistant Organist,
Mr. R. M. Conly, People's Warden,
Mr. C. A. Rattray, Vicar's Warden,
Rev. A. D. Hewson, Assistant Curate,
Mr. S. Threadgill, Verger.

. . . for every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God

The times of storm and trouble during the past hundred years have surely discouraged the most ardent battlers for the Faith from time to time. It is given to very few of us to see beyond our own immediate horizons, and this is perhaps the chief value of this history; that the calamities which threatened, and sometimes came to pass, though they sounded like the clap of doom in the ears of their generation, were surmounted, and served only to strengthen the Parish in ways which their witnesses could never have foreseen.

Look, for instance, at the Day School. It was opened in 1874, as has already been recounted, with a roll of 40 pupils. Unfortunately the records do not show clearly exactly when it finally closed, but in the years between the date of its closing and the days of its beginnings, when the Misses Gray taught, many pupils must have passed through its classes.

Then there was the Kindergarten, not officially attached to, but definitely supported by St. Mary's. This would have opened about 1915 or 1916. It was begun by Miss Annie Webb, who started it in a small cottage next door to the present St. Albans Post Office. (The cottage was demolished in February of 1966.) As her school grew Miss Webb moved to the Methodist Sunday Schoolroom in Rugby Street and when that schoolroom was no longer available, she established her school in St. Mary's Schoolrooms. This was in Archdeacon Haggitt's time, during the First World War.

Her elder sister, Miss Mary Webb, was an assistant teacher, and other teachers were her two younger sisters, with Miss Violet Youngman, Miss Dora Satchell and Miss Violet Seymour.

Miss Webb retired in 1928, and the Kindergarten was closed, but she always enjoyed visits from her former pupils, some of whom had married and now brought their children to see her. She died in her 92nd year - but her influence, (and through her, the influence of St. Mary's ,) continues to make itself felt; for many, many of her pupils made a considerable mark in the community.

Familiar names amongst them include Mr. Colin Hart, who is presently so very active in St. Mary's affairs; Miss Betty Webb, on the Board of the North Canterbury Hospital; Mrs. Chambers, formerly Matron-in-Chief to the North Canterbury Hospital Board, Miss Audrey Orbell until recently Director of Nursing Services in New Zealand; and her sister, Miss Betty Orbell, lately Deputy Director of Nursing Services.

Looking at wider spheres of influence, St. Mary's has had an influence on New Zealand life in many other ways, perhaps out of all proportion to the size of the Parish.

In every town in New Zealand where there is a Saturday game of football, and in every centre which can boast a Free Ambulance Service, there is a connection with St. Mary's. For in 1885, a meeting was held at St. Mary's, Merivale, with a view to forming the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in New Zealand.

A number of doctors, some clergy and about one hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen met in the Parish Hall, and the Vicar of St. Mary's, the Rev. Thomas Flavell, was elected Chairman. The Dean of Christchurch, Dr. Jacobs, was present, as was the Vicar of St. Paul's, Papanui, the Rev. J. O'Bryan Hoare. The doctors' names are still familiar in Christchurch; names such as Guthrie, Moorhouse, Anderson and Britten. Amongst them was a Dr. Hacon, who had been a member of the Order in England, and he spoke to the assembly, pointing out the dire need for having people trained in the skills necessary to deal with accidents. He outlined the St. John's scheme for lectures and examinations in proficiency, and - using a lecturing technique we are pleased to regard as modern - demonstrated for his audience several methods of treating accident victims before the arrival of skilled aid; First Aid, in fact.

Dr. Britten then took over, calling in the assistance of some members of the City Guards to show how easy it is to make a stretcher out of a man's overcoat and a couple of rifles.

Dr. Jacobs, the Dean, then moved that a branch of

The St. John Ambulance Brigade Standard Bearer hands "The Colour" to Archdeacon S. E. Woods during 80th Anniversary Service in St. Mary's, Merivale, 27th. June, 1965.

Photo, Green & Hahn.

the Society be formed, to be called the Canterbury Branch of the St. John Ambulance Association. "I had imagined," he said, "that this Society was to be utilised only in time of war; but Dr. Hacon has shown how useful it would be at all times and in all places."

Mr. Hoare, the Vicar of Papanui, seconded the motion. Sixty-nine members joined immediately and a committee of twelve was elected, formed of six ladies and six men, among whom were the Dean of Christchurch, the Vicar of St. Mary's, Merivale and the Vicar of St. Paul's, Papanui. Votes of thanks were passed to the Chairman, Mr. Flavell, and to Dr. Hacon and his colleagues and, be it noted, the City Guards.

The Committee sat immediately afterwards and decided to ask His Excellency the Governor and Lady Jervois to become, respectively, Presidents of the Gentlemen's and Ladies' Branches. The Mayors of Christchurch, Sydenham and St. Albans were to be asked to accept Vice-Presidencies. Mr. Flavell was appointed Secretary.

Thus a New Zealand-wide movement was begun as a Chapter of a world-wide Society, here at St. Mary's, Merivale.

But the Parish was to see the beginnings of something even bigger. It was to originate a world-wide movement which has grown to flourish in most countries For, incredible though it may seem, the Wolf Cub Movement began in this Parish. It happend in this way.

Colonel D. Cosgrove, who was the founder of the Boy Scout Movement in New Zealand, was living in Merivale in 1916. He was then Chief Commissioner of Scouts. Col. Cosgrove arranged with Archdeacon Haggitt, Vicar of St. Mary's, to call a meeting of boys attending Elmwood School and, as a result of this meeting, the Merivale Scout Troop was formed, on August 4th, 1916.

Archdeacon Haggitt, that busy man, agreed to accept a nominal rank of Scoutmaster, but he knew little or nothing about the movement, and cast around for someone within the Parish who had had some experience of Scouting. He discovered that Mr. R. J. G. Collins, then a student at Canterbury College, had been a member of the Kelburn Scout Troop in Wellington, and he arranged for Mr. Collins to be commissioned as Scoutmaster, and to take control of the Troop.

Although the new Troop consisted of boys belonging to several denominations, their parents readily agreed that they should attend Church Parades at St. Mary's, and weekly meetings were held in the Parish Hall.

Initially, sufficient boys had joined to provide a full troop of three patrols, but such enthusiasm was evinced that, before the end of 1916, a second troop came into being. Captain H. Bradley and Messrs. C. C. Warner, H. Thomas and F. Breward gave lectures on signalling, fire fighting, first aid and life saving, and several senior boys soon reached stages of proficiency sufficient to enable them to act as instructors.

Such was the keen spirit of the boys that in 1917 No. 1 Troop won the King's Standard, presented by King George V through General Baden Powell, to be awarded to the champion troop in the Dominion. In recognition of this award and of the boys' enthusiasm and remarkable efficiency, the Dominion Council granted the Troop the honour of being known as "The Colonel's Own."

But the Merivale Scouts did not rest on their laurels. In the following year, Merivale No. 1 (The Colonel's Own) Troop won the Standard for the second time, achieving a British Empire record in that every member had qualified for the highest rank of King's Scout, with the Troop gaining a total of 258 proficiency badges!

This year was notable for yet further honours. Mr. Collins was awarded the Silver Kuri and was promoted to the rank of Chief Scoutmaster. Archdeacon Haggitt became an honorary Chief Scoutmaster. Patrol Leader F. E. Musgrove received the Tatum Gold Medal as the "Most Chivalrous and Best All-round Scout" in the Dominion. Patrol Leader E. Johnson won the Flower Clasp and Medal for the "Best All-round Scout in Canterbury." The Colonel's Own Troop gained the Otter Challenge Shield for the Championship of the Dominion in swimming and life saving. The Governor General himself wrote commending and congratulating the Troop for the distinctions so justly earned.

It is not surprising, therefore, that quite a number of boys who had not yet reached the minimum age for admission as Scouts had been attending meetings as somewhat wistful spectators. Colonel Cosgrove there-

fore conceived the idea of extending the movement in New Zealand to provide for these younger boys, and he authorised the formation in Merivale of an experimental patrol which was given the name of "Bull Pup" Patrol.

The Colonel designed a special uniform, replacing the Scouts' felt hat with a khaki drill Glengarrie cap. The first patrol was formed in May, 1918, and by the following month it was necessary to form a second patrol - the "Wolf Cub" Patrol.

This new movement proved immediately and extremely popular, and patrols were formed throughout the country. A competition which was equivalent to that of the King's Standard was held, and the Merivale Troop became the first holders of the "Totem Pole."

The rank of Prince Scout was established as the equivalent of King's Scout, and the first to achieve this rank was Patrol Leader V. B. F. Collins, then aged 9.

The new movement was so successful that Colonel Cosgrove submitted a special report to Lord Baden Powell, as a result of which Headquarters in Great Britain established the "Cubs," a movement which spread throughout the world.

It is tragic that the Merivale Scouts were allowed to break up. It was nobody's intention that they should, but a chain of unfortunate circumstances made it inevitable.

The Deputy Provincial Commissioner for Canterbury ordered a parade of the Merivale Company for April 30th, 1919, but since a serious influenza epidemic was raging at the time, Mr. Collins, with the approval of Archdeacon Haggitt, advised the Deputy Commissioner that it was considered unwise to hold evening parades. The Deputy Commissioner thereupon suspended Mr. Collins and the Merivale Company, an action which had serious results for the Movement in Christchurch.

The District Commander and the civilian members of the District Committee all resigned in protest. The Press published leading articles demanding a public enquiry, which was eventually held under the Chairmanship of Dr. Fenwick. Mr. Collins and the Merivale Company were exonerated, but unfortunately so much time had elapsed since the suspension had gone into effect that irreparable damage had been done. An attempt was made to reform the Merivale Troop in No. 2 District as a troop attached to St. Mary's, but this was unsuccessful.

Dominion Boy Scouts - Merivale Battalion, 1917.

Back row L to R:- D. Stewart, S. Tomkies, J. Hobday, R. Hobday, B. Forsyth, D. Hobbs, L. Pither.

Fourth row:- ——— R. Chester, ——— M. Bull, R. Willberg, A. Chester, E. Mander, D. Woodward, F. Keys, B. Harvey.

Third row:- T. Lovell, D. Stewart, K. Orr, A. Thompson, R. Laurie, L. Webley, G. Hamber, E. Smith, B. Johnson, R. Bradley, A. Perkins.

Seated:- T. Shaw, E. Johnson, M. Graham, Asst. Scoutmaster Rev. W. H. Stych, Archdeacon P. B. Haggitt, Scoutmaster R. J. G. Collins, F. Musgrove, T. Longdin, D. Thornton, G. Hobbs.

Front row:- G. Marris, A. Kay, ——— W. Matson, V. B. F. Collins, J. Frizzell, L. Kernahan, R. Wright, H. McKay. ———

Yet the record stands. From this Parish, a Youth Movement started which still flourishes all over the world!

In more direct ways, too, the Parish has reached out, showing a lively sense of the identity of its "neighbours". On a purely local level, perhaps a good example would be the Merivale Branch of the Guild of Help, Community of the Sacred Name.

In 1925, Dr. William Irving, who was medical adviser to the Sisters of the Community of the Sacred Name, discovered that the Sisters were in poor health, and needed money to assist them to obtain the bare necessities of life.

The Doctor approached Miss Havelaar with a view to persuading her to spread the word of the Sisters' urgent need amongst the ladies of Christchurch. The plan was that ladies in various districts would be asked to gather their friends together at their homes, where Miss Havelaar would tell them of the needs of the Community.

Miss Havelaar sent word out immediately, and ladies from all over Christchurch answered her call. From Merivale went Mrs. Edwin Hamilton and Mrs. J. G. L. Vernon. A Committee was formed, with Mrs. Cracroft-Wilson as President, Miss Lucy Saunders as Secretary and Miss Rachel Ross as Treasurer.

Its first action was to send the ladies back to their districts and Parishes with instructions to call meetings at their homes. The first meeting in St. Mary's Parish was held at Mrs. Vernon's home, where Miss Havelaar addressed the assembled ladies and told them of the dire needs of the community. She asked members of this newly formed group to contribute 3d weekly, to be paid in a lump sum of 13/- at an annual meeting to be held in Mrs Vernon's house.

In 1930, Mrs. Hamilton was asked by Mrs. Vernon to take over her circle of helpers, together with a small group led by Miss Olive McIlraith.

In the course of time, some members fell away and Mrs. Hamilton began the task of building up the circle again. Mrs. Buchanan, of Murray Place, was forced to give up her work for the Community because of ill health, and Mrs. Hamilton was asked by the indefatigable Miss Havelaar, who was keeping a watchful eye on the organisation, to take over this group, also. Mrs. Hamilton consented to this, and promptly called a meeting of Mrs. Buchanan's group. This group, she discovered, had been holding monthly meetings, and now asked Mrs. Hamilton to continue them.

She did so willingly, no small feat considering the responsibilities she had already shouldered in connection with this work.

Sensibly, the organisation has been kept as simple as possible, with the minimum of formality and the accent on friendly cooperation. Each meeting is opened with a prayer, a practice which has been a source of great strength; and at each meeting a speaker is invited to address the group, or a musical programme or some other form of entertainment is arranged.

A typical activity was the knitting of peggy squares, which two of the members, Miss Owen and Miss Pitts, sewed together to make warm rugs for the Sisters' own use, or for them to give to invalids. Oddments of cotton materials were bought, which Mrs. Pierce made up into patchwork quilts, backed with more cotton materials, for Missionaries in the Pacific Islands.

For some time, this dedicated group was known as the Merivale-St. Albans Branch of the Guild of Help, Community of the Sacred Name, but eventually one of the members, Miss G. Newell, who lived in St. Albans, decided to start a circle of her own. Since that time, Mrs. Hamilton's Branch has been known as the Merivale Circle.

Like the Parish itself, the Branch has seen bad years and good, but it has persevered, sometimes contributing well over £100 annually, and sometimes dropping to £50. The present President, Mrs. J. Ferrier of McDougall Avenue, and Miss Islip of Devonport Lane, have worked tirelessly to build up membership, and the Branch aims by the end of 1966 to have made a record contribution - one more indication of the spirit which has animated the Parish of St. Mary, Merivale, throughout its hundred years of life.

If some of these activities seem small enough, think of them as Mustard Seeds. What did Our Lord say about Mustard Seeds?

" ... a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

How many mustard seeds such as these have been sown throughout the long years since first the little Chapel-of-Ease was built in Mr. Peacock's meadow? The Mothers' Union, which stands and works for the sanctity of home and family, growing in the course of time into two thriving groups, and the Young Wives' Group; and the Women's Group, which did so much in the years immediately following the last war towards the comfort and wellbeing of the people of Britain, packing and sending many hundreds of pounds of food parcels; or the Men's Fellowship, working in and around the church, and extending the hand of friendship and comfort to people in Burwood Hospital; or the Youth Groups and Twenty-plus Organisation; the ordinary members of the Parish, opening their homes to study groups, and guiding and showing a genuine interest in young people preparing for Confirmation; not forgetting the money provided for the support of, and physical and spiritual salvation of children in Korea and Indonesia and wherever war, famine and pestilence have left little ones in need of sustenance, care and comfort.

Certainly these things are no more than Christian duty, for it behoves us all to play the Good Samaritan, and doubtless there have been times when more could have been done, or when interest flagged. But in all these hundred years, the real cause for thankfulness lies in the fact that there have been so many families and individuals who have acted as rallying points, have set noble examples and have not been content merely to "do their bit."

These, by God's Grace, have been the stones of which the House Built Upon a Rock is strongly constructed.

and gave for the service of the house of God

It is a truism, and therefore true, that the Church is not the building in which the congregation worships, but it is nevertheless important that the building should provide the right atmosphere for communion with God.
It is, moreover, God's House, and it is fitting that it should be as beautiful as we can make it. A propos of this, one Vicar of St. Mary's, Merivale, remarked: ... God made the eye as well as the ear and the heart. To many, beauty of worship suggests beauty of holiness, beauty of repentance and beauty of service."

This sense of beauty and appreciation of the power of the beautiful has obviously been strong in the people of Merivale, many of whom have contributed lavishly towards the beautifying of their Church.

The Rev. Francis Knowles himself was at work on the beautifying of St. Mary's in its very earliest days, painting texts in pleasingly executed characters on the beams and rafters. And as early as 1879, gifts of furniture were made by Messrs. Studholme and Garrick, as a special contribution to changes in the arrangement of the Chancel of the old church.

In 1880, the church acquired a new lect ern and reading desk, presenting the old reading desk to the Rev. H. E. East, Vicar of Addington, who had previously bought the original pulpit for three guineas.

In 1882, Mrs. W. B. Rhodes presented St. Mary's with the handsome silver Communion Set which is in use to this day, whereupon the Vestry of the day decided to present to "some needy parish," the old set, subject to the donor's permission.

In 1887, the December Minutes record a vote of thanks to Mrs. J. Studholme for her "valuable and handsome gift" of stained glass windows.
It must have been about this time, although the records are not clear on this point, that a beautiful "Agnus Dei" window was given for the Chancel by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Lane. A rose window in the old church was also an object of considerable beauty, but the name of the donor cannot now be traced.

Mrs. Sabine made a presentation of elegant brass candlesticks in September, 1901, and Mr. Cox set to work at this time to complete the Texts in the Chancel.

Other presentations include two Sick Communion Sets, given by Mrs. W. D. Revington and Mrs. R. J. Lyon, a solid silver Flagon in memory of S. T. Twentyman and Cruets given by Rev. W. Limbrick.

When, in 1927, the new church was built, Mrs. Studholme's two side windows, the rose window and the "Agnus Dei" window were given to the Hospital Chapel, then nearing completion. They are there today. Four memorial windows were transferred to the new church; but more of these later.

In 1936, Mr. J. D. Twentyman gave a silver flagon, still in use, and in 1937, the Church of Our Ladie, Merevale Park, Warwickshire, gave to the Vicar of St. Mary's, Merivale, a block of stone from its ancient walls, to be set in the walls of its younger sister in Merivale, Christchurch, New Zealand.

This gift was especially significant, since between the two churches there was a link which went back far beyond the beginnings of Merivale Parish.

Sir William Dugdale, the owner of Merevale Park, told Archdeacon Warren that in the early half of the Nineteenth Century, two young men, sons of the Incumbent of Merevale in Warwickshire, came to New Zealand to take up land in the vicinity of the settlement of Christchurch, which was then in the planning stage. They called their land Merevale, after the estate of the Dugdale family, on which they had spent their childhood.

Very probably, Archdeacon Warren conjectured, they had worshipped within the walls of the church from which the block of stone came.

The stone itself is very ancient, quarried about 1280. But let that Vicar, now Bishop Warren, tell its story.

"Let us in imagination go there," he said to his parishioners at the Parish Festival, December 20th,

1936, "leaving the heart of the City of London and travelling the ancient Roman Road of Watling Street which, for great parts of its distance, runs straight as a die to the Forest of Arden. We come eventually, just before Atherstone, to a turning off to the right, which bears the strangely familiar name of Merevale Lane. This lane borders a beautiful park studded with some of the largest groves of oaks in England ...

High up on the hill, overlooking the park, stands the house, much of which has been the home of the Dugdale family since 1620. Near to the side entrance to the Park from Merevale Lane stand the ruins of the old Cistercian Abbey, and the existing Parish Church which started as Lady Chapel of the Abbey ...

The Abbey of Merevale was founded in 1148, in the reign of King Stephen, by one Robert Earl Ferrers. It was a time of great anarchy in England. Stephen and the Empress Maud were fighting for the crown, and in the process great parts of eastern and middle England were laid waste. The Barons and their followers no doubt had their fill of war, but for peaceful souls there seemed no place. The Church was the only protection recognised by fighting warriors. This explains the reason for the many Abbeys and religious foun ations established in those days."

Archdeacon Warren went on to explain that Robert Earl Ferrers, one of William the Conqueror's right-hand men set aside all his woodland in Arden for the building of his new Abbey, a monastery of the Cictercian Order.

The Cistercians were an order of farming monks, who lived an austere life, and their mother church in England was the great Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire. They lived simply, keeping silence day and night unless required to speak to superiors on necessary matters. During meals one of them would read from the lives of the Saints from the pulpit of the refectory, which you can still see standing there today in the ruins of Merevale Abbey.

The Cistercians chose here a site which they named Merevale, one explanation of the meaning being from the Latin mira vallis, beautiful valley. The three essential things were present hereabouts ... water, building stone and timber.

Originally, the Cistercians were what might today be called a "low church" order of monks. Their buildings were bare, with very little ornamentation. But the Abbey Church had a magnificent east window which was later incorporated into the little Parish Church of Our Ladie at Merevale.

Merevale Church, Warwickshire.

The first set of Abbey buildings were of Norman architecture, built rather hurriedly and without much money to spend on them, and they fell into decay within 50 years. The second Abbey was completed gradually as the monks could afford it. Between the building of the first and second Abbeys, it seems clear that the monks built alongside, in 1280, the Lady Chapel which forms the nave of the present Parish Church, and which survived when the second Abbey, in its turn, was ruined.

After the dissolution of the Abbeys under Henry VIII, the decay of the Abbey buildings was rapid. The scattered inhabitants could no longer support the huge Abbey church, and the tombs and monuments and glass were gradually removed to the Lady Chapel at the gate. Amongst them the beautiful east window, containing lovely 15th Century glass, survived because it was buried in Cromwell's time.

There, then, is a brief history of the Parish Church of Our Ladie, Merevale. Connected tenuously by the two sons of its one-time Vicar, who settled in the district to which they gave the name, Merevale, it is now connected more strongly by the gift of Merevale stone.

The gift of the stone was news, as might be expected, in the Merevale district. "Atherstone News," the local paper, reported on Friday, November 13th, 1936, what its headline described as the "Romance of Stone's 12,000 Miles Journey."

"In the hold of a liner which steamed out of Southampton yesterday," it reads, "bound on its 12,000 miles voyage to New Zealand there was a block of stone taken out of the nave of Merevale Church, Atherstone, and is to be placed in the porch of St. Mary's Merivale, Christchurch, New Zealand."

The article went on to describe how Archdeacon Warren, "a tall young cleric, spoke of his appointment to St. Mary's, Merivale, and how he often wondered how his parish was so named."

It gave the history of the ancient glories of "what is known as the Chapel of Our Lady Beyond the Gate," much of which Archdeacon Warren later related to his Parish.

Incidentally, the Communion Plate given by Mrs. W. B. Rhodes in 1882 in memory of her husband is inscribed as presented to St. Mary's Church, Merevale. Also in Burke's "Colonial Gentry," 1891 edition, Mr. John Studholme is described as being "of Merevale, near Christchurch." The change of spelling to Merivale, with an "i", is clearly of quite modern origin.

There are, of course, parallels to be drawn between the two Parishes of Merevale and Merivale, and the gift of the stone provides such a strong link as to make one feel some sense of continuity with the turbulent years of that ancient English Abbey church.

Amongst the gifts of furniture and decoration made to St. Mary's, the windows are perhaps the most readily appreciated.

Amongst the windows which beautified the old church were three which are now mounted in the west end of the Clerestory, the south wall and the north transept. Others from the old church were, as has been mentioned, donated to the Hospital Chapel, but these three, which will be described later, were retained.

As you sit in the nave and look towards the altar, you cannot fail to be struck by the gloriously colourful East Window. There is no need to explain its subject, for the Nativity is the part of the Gospels which, apart from its significance never fails to warm the heart.

The window vividly depicts the Adoration of the Christ Child by the Magi and the shepherds. In the centre light, the Madonna, in a blue robe, is seated upon a manger with a thatched arbour which tends into the side lights. Upon her knee is seated the Holy Babe, and the rays of the Star strike upon them both. Round about the central figures is a golden irradiation, and upon the thatch above stand two adoring angels holding a ribbon which bears the words: "Unto us a Child is born: Unto us a Son is given."

In the head of the light there is a great star which pours its rays downward, and across the foot of the window runs a ribbon carrying the words of the memorial inscription: "To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Thomas Chamberlain Field, died 15th December 1921, and of his wife Elizabeth Annie Field, died 18th June 1926."

In the centre of the base is a "Cross Crosslet," a decorative form for the symbol of the Consummation of Christ's Mission on earth.

In the left-hand light are three shepherds who watch their flocks by night," who, after the appearance of the angel to them, journeyed to Bethleham to see the thing which had come to pass. One of these has hung his lantern on a branch, (which may be considered as symbolic of the coming of Our Lord)as the "Light of the World," and holds the edge of a fur skin, one of the gifts of the three peasants. The second presents a branch of berried holly and the third, a youth, a nest of wild bird's eggs. A sheep and a lamb complete their offerings.

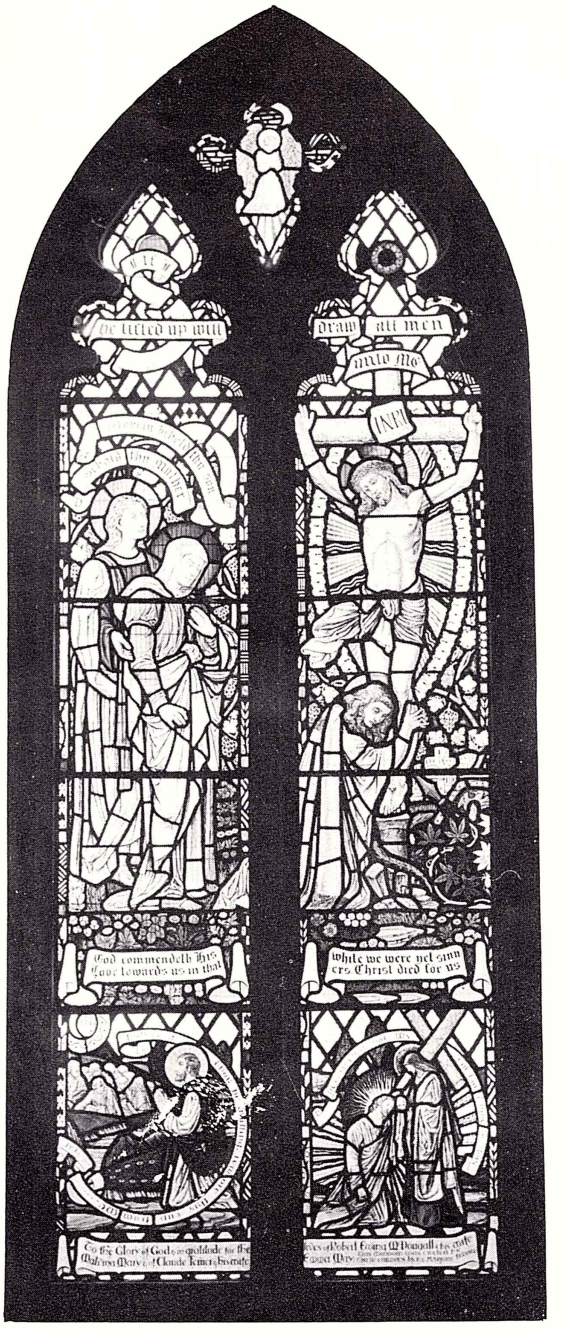
Behind them is an angel figure holding a sun, suggestive of the dawning of the "Sun of Righteousness."

In the other light the kings, Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar have relinquished their crowns in homage to the King of Kings, and are shown surrounded by their costly gifts, cases of jewels, frankincense and myrrh, golden dishes and vessels, vesture and a purse. Behind them, a down-to-earth, homely, exceedingly pleasant touch, is the small figure of Joseph sawing logs to build a fire.

The herbage around the manger includes crocus, snowdrops, daffodils and other flowers, with stark trees behind them. Against the blue sky can be seen the spears and shields of the kings, and the moon can be seen still hanging in the blue.

In the base of the sidelights are, respectively, the Holy City of Jerusalem, a river which is possibly Jordan, and the Holy City of Bethlehem.

Another beautiful window is that which portrays the Crucifixion. In it, the Crucified Christ looks down on the Chapel pews, and the inscription informs us that this window was erected "To the Glory of God and in gratitude for the lives of Robert Ewing McDougall and his wife, Malvina Mary, and of Claude Ferrier and his wife, Emma May." This window was given by Mr. and Mrs. Ferrier's son, Jack and his wife Marjorie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. McDougall.



Typical of the beautiful windows in St. Mary's are these two in the Lady Chapel in memory of R. E. and M. M. McDougall and C. and E. M. Ferrier.

The window over the Chapel Sanctuary is, appropriately enough, the Resurrection, thus furnishing, with the other, reminders of the two great Facts on which our Faith is built. It was chosen and lovingly erected by those who were pupils and staff members of Rangi Ruru School between 1889 and 1946, it is inscribed:

"To the Glory of God and ingrateful memory of Helen Fanny Gibson, founder and beloved Principal of Rangi Ruru Girls' School, born 18th July 1868, died 24th July, 1938." The inscription ends, fittingly since its speaks of one whose Christian influence is still being felt, "She, being dead, yet speaketh."

The window at the back of the Chapel shows St. Anne and the Virgin. It is inscribed: "To the Glory of God and in Memory of John Joseph Weathered, 1857 - 1935, and of his wife, Sarah Georgina, 1863 - 1960." It was presented by Miss Mary Weathered.

In the south wall there is a richly hued window depicting St. John. This window is a memorial to John Studholme born 1829, died 1902, and Ellen Studholme, his wife, born 1838, died 1902.

St. John is represented with the cup and serpent, symbolic of the poisoned chalice which he was given. He is shown standing on a bank of herbage, and behind him is a river, emblematic of his version of the Gospel. The River is that which has its source in Paradise. Behind St. John is an eagle holding a case of pens, a figure associated with St. John from Ezekiel and Revelation. On the grass is a partridge, alluding to the legend that St. John tamed and kept one of these birds. Above him, in a small medallion, is the Lamb holding the Cross, and below is the fire and cauldron. St. John is said to have been put into a cauldron of boiling oil before the Latin Gate at Rome, and to have suffered no harm.

Next to St. John in the south wall is the window depicting St. Paul. This window is a memorial to Frederick Denhame Gibson, 1831 - 1915, and his wife Mary Fox Gibson, 1840 - 1919. St. Paul is shown shielding his face from the dazzling, blinding light of his vision on the Damascus Road. In all other respects the setting shown is similar to that in which the Evangelists are shown, with the exception of the river, but behind him on the grass are disposed the whole armour of God; Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith, Breastplate of Righteousness, Helmet of Salvation, Girdle of Truth, Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel. Each piece is winged.
In the medallion above is the Phoenix, associated with St. Paul, who stressed the Doctrine of Eternal Life, or the Immortality of the Soul of Man.
In the medallion below is the legendary incident of the serpent fastening harmlessly on his hand as he was tending the fire.

Beside St. Paul, the beautiful picture of St. Matthew glows in the south light. This window recalls Phoebe Marian Helmore, "who died on Easter Sunday, 1927." St. Matthew is shown in the same greensward setting, with pen and book in his hand. Behind him is an angel holding an inkhorn, his symbol, reminding us of the fact that he was a customs official. The medallions show the Gospel According to St. Matthew, a purse, a rule and a square, suggestive of his customs duties.

Next comes one of the windows transferred from the old church, a gloriously designed window called "Spes," which is Latin for "Hope." This window is a memorial to Georgina Clare Helmore, who died June 12th,1905. The text reads: "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

The Baptistry window is another window most appropriate to its site, for it shows Jesus blessing children. This window is in memory of Judith Dundas Firth, who was born 21st June 1918, and died at Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands on 5th January 1947. Judith Firth was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A.K. Firth, of Circuit Street, who have been such wonderful benefactors of St. Mary's, and of whom more will be told later.

The Clerestory window, second of the windows from the old church, colourfully depicting Faith, Hope and Charity, is dedicated to "The Glory of God and in Memory of William and Alice Lane." And it is surely no more than their due, for their work for early St. Mary's, Merivale, had been of inestimable value.

In the north wall, St. Cecilia is a memorial to Marianne Bathurst Firth, of Sheffield, England, who died in 1919.
Next to St. Cecilia stands St. Peter. He is shown standing upon a rock, and he holds the Key. Behind him is the inverted cross of his martyrdom and the fishing net of his trade. Sea thistle and thrift grow on the rocky verge of the sea, and fishes can be seen in the meshes of the net. Above him is a medallion of the Good Shepherd, suggesting Christ's charge to St. Peter after His resurrection - "Feed my sheep." Behind St. Peter is the River, emblem of the Water of Life which flows through the world from the teaching of the Evangelists in their Gospels. The St. Peter window is a memorial to Henry Philip Hill, who died in 1925, and to Nora Alice Hill, who died in 1927.

Passing St. Peter, we come to the strong figure of St. Mark. He holds in his left hand his version of the Gospel, and holds his right hand up in blessing. His emblem, the Lion, is behind him. In the head of the light is a medallion with mitre and crozier, reminding us of the fact that he was Bishop of Alexandria. It will be noticed, too, that he wears a chasuble, if further evidence of his episcopal dignity is needed. In the base of the light is a medallion of the Barren Fig Tree, the incident in the life of Our Lord which St. Mark alone relates. This lovely window is dedicated to "The Glory of God and in loving memory of George Henry Noble Helmore, born June 1862, died June 1922."
The third of the windows from the old church is that showing the Annunciation. It glows like a jewel in the north transept, and is in memory of Francis James Garrick and Elizabeth, his wife, "erected as a loving tribute by their children."

Last, and perhaps most beautiful of all, is the window erected to "The Glory of God and in loving memory of Walcot Wood, born 1864, died 1934, and of his wife, Amy Laetitia Wood, born 1870, died 1937."

The design shows Our Lord as a youth, working in the Carpenter's Shop. His Mother and earthly Father are close by. St. Joseph is shown at one side of the Carpenter's bench, and the adze he has just used to trim up a length of timber rests on the bench. Jesus has just taken the piece of trimmed timber. St. Mary is shown looking at a stand which Jesus has made, intended for holding an oil vessel and wick for lighting purposes. The stand is shown as the means of securing the light, and is suggestive of the spiritual darkness of the world till it is lit by the ministry of

the light of the World. This suggestion is carried further by the low-toned colours of the clothing worn by St. Mary and St. Joseph, while the figure of Jesus is all light and brightness.

In a corner below Our Lord is a tool box in which the hammer and the brace suggest the monogram, J.S., which stands for Jesus Salvator. The joiner's square on the wall above His head suggests the rectitude with which He ruled His life; the T-Square on the beam predicts the Cross on which He was to be Crucified.

The Madonna has four red crosses on her sash, symbolic of the four chief sorrows of her life - the leaving of her home to flee into Egypt; the loss of the Child Jesus and the search which ended in finding Him disputing with the Doctors in the Temple; the trial and Crucifixion of Our Lord; His entombment.

At the head and base of the window, and in the tracery above, are symbols taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, Chapter 6, Verse 13. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day."

There is the Girdle of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, feet shod with the Preparation of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit.

This window is a fitting tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Wood, for as Our Lord worked for the building of His Church, they worked exceedingly hard and quite unobtrusively for the building of His Kingdom, and for the Parish Church of St. Mary, Merivale.

Whoever first conceived the idea of stained glass windows as memorials hit upon a truly happy thought, for surely there can be no more lovely way to record the names of all those faithful, hardworking members of the congregation.

There are many other wonderful gifts beautifying and serving the church. It has already been recounted how Mr. Jamieson, the builder, donated the panelling. A similar work was the provision of the carved kauri Chancel screen. This work was originally intended as pew ends, which were carved at the rate of two per year in his spare time by Archdeacon Gossett, over a number of years. Mr. J. Blyth and Mrs. Greenstreet also carved some. However, since they were not suitable for the purpose, or sufficient in number, they were used in the Chancel screen and for backs of chairs in the Sanctuary.

In 1950, a chime of eight bells was presented to the Parish. The gift was conditional on the bells not being used for playing hymn tunes, and was anonymous - or so it was intended. Unfortunately for the donor's cloak of anonymity, when the bells were delivered the packing cases were addressed to the donor, care of St. Mary's Church, Merivale, and so it became known that the parishioners to whose great generosity the Parish owed its new bells were Mr. and Mrs. A.K. Firth of Circuit Street.

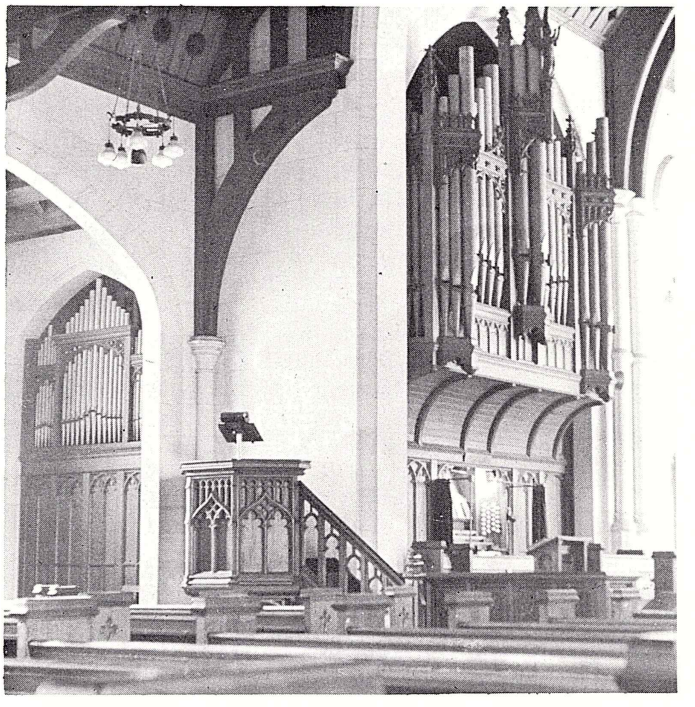
The gift was announced in the Parish Magazine, April 1950. "We are to have a chime of eight bells in St. Mary's tower before many months have passed," it read. "The makers will be Messrs. Gillett and Johnston, Bell Founders, Croydon, England. The bells are to be sent out from England complete with a specially constructed steel frame to fit into our tower. This will mean that they will be easy to keep adjusted and tuned. They are being presented to St. Mary's by a parishioner and his wife. It is a splendid gift and we accept it most thankfully. A very wise provision which we accept gladly is that the bells shall not be used for playing hymn tunes. That is not a right use of bells. They will, of course, be used for all other ringing. No doubt the heart of many a bride will beat a little faster when the bells ring out for her wedding."

"An interesting point about these bells is that a similar chime was mounted on a large lorry, and went ringing through the streets of London, to call the people to the Mission of London held in that city recently."

"The old bell will sound the call to worship on many occasions, as there is no intention of replacing it altogether, or indulging in excessive ringing of the new ones, but it will be a great joy to hear them sing for some services, and on special occasions. Our tower is very suitable for such a chime."

The old bell, as it happens, is not so very old. It was given in 1927 in memory of William Strange, and his wife, Jean, by their daughter Lillian.

Mr. Firth also gave the organ. It is dedicated to the Greater Glory of God, and in memory of R.C. Dundas Firth, B.A., Riverdale, Sugworth Hall, Sheffield, England, who died in December, 1914. Mr. A.K. Firth was his brother. He set up the organ in 1927, in which year, on 6th August, it was dedicated.



View of organ showing console in original position.

Mr. Firth was very impressed by the organ in the Christchurch Cathedral, and he ordered one, to be built by Hill, Norman & Beard, Ltd., of London. This instrument was based tonally on the Christchurch Cathedral organ, and was designed by Sydney (later Sir Sydney) Nicholson, the founder of the Royal School of Church Music. The Merivale Organ was shipped out

to New Zealand, being placed in bond at Lyttelton for several months because the church was far from ready for its installation.

At last, however, the church was ready - but there was some trouble over the installation. It seems that between the ordering and the building of the organ, the plans of the church had had to be modified, and the organ chamber was too small!

The organ was installed, but such was the cramping caused by the building modifications that the full volume and glorious tone of the instrument were sadly affected. The reduced openings severely restricted the egress of sound.

Within ten years it was found necessary to enlarge the organ substantially. It is now the largest Parish organ in New Zealand and, next to the Cathedral organ, the largest in Christchurch.

At the time of writing, repairs and alterations are being carried out, partly because of wear and tear and partly because a way has been found to alleviate the problems associated with the placing of such a large organ in a restricted space. It has been decided to move the console to the south side of the Chancel, which gives much-needed room in the chamber to modify the present layout and, incidentally, allows the organist to hear, for the first time, what is being played!

The St. Mary's organ has approximately 2,800 pipes, the largest of which is 32 feet long, and the smallest of which is about the thickness of a small knitting needle. The casework is of carved English oak, and this, too, has few peers in New Zealand. The present replacement value of the organ is over £25,000.

Another of Mr. Firth's gifts was the St. Cecilia window, already mentioned in this history. It has an interesting story, for it seems that the window was in memory of his mother. This lady laid the foundation stone of the church of St. John the Evangelist, Ranmoor, just above Mr. Firth's present home, Riverdale, in England. When Mr. Firth's mother died in 1919, he decided to give the memorial window to this church. It seems a parishioner in Merivale promised a window in memory of his daughter, who died in the 1918 'flu epidemic, but as the new church was about to become a reality, and no window had yet been given, Archdeacon Haggitt asked Mr. Firth if he would put his window into St. Mary's, instead of having it erected at St. John's, Ranmoor. Mr. Firth agreed, and that is how we now have a fine stained glass window dedicated to the memory of a lady in Sheffield, England.

The pulpit, one of the church furnishings which immediately delights the eye with its pleasing design, was given by the scholars of Rangi Ruru School as a thank-offering. It has carved on it the words: "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet."

The altar rails were erected as a memorial to Rosa and Thomas Maling, and of their daughter Anne. Mr. and Mrs. Maling, it will be remembered, opened the St. Albans East Sunday School. Mr. and Mrs. Maling both died in 1922, and their daughter died in 1925.

The font bears the inscription: "To the Glory of God, in loving memory of John Waller, born 1835, died 1907, and of Mary Ann his wife, born 1835, died 1918. This Baptistry was erected by their children."

Some of the Communion vessels. On the left, the large Chalice and Paten given by Mrs. C.A. Stringer and the set on the right presented by Mrs. W.B. Rhodes in 1882.

In the Chapel is a well-designed altar, possessing the simple dignity appropriate to the Lord's Table. It was given by the daughter of Mary Frances and Arthur Trueman Chapman, to whom it is a fine memorial. The chapel also contains a prayer desk which is a memorial, recalling Alfred and Augusta Ensor, the very first couple to be married in St. Mary's Church, Merivale, on 31st October, 1872. This desk also serves as a memorial to their daughter, Georgina Ellen Blathwayt. It was given by her daughter, Miss .M. Blathwayt, at present Home Sister at Christchurch Hospital.

The Chapel Altar is furnished with a pair of candle-sticks in memory of Alan Julian Petrie, Vicar of Merivale from 1940 - 1947.

Other members of the Parish family are remembered by memorial brasses. Isaac Gibbs, for example, has a memorial in a brass plate on the south east wall, fittingly inscribed: "In loving memory of Isaac Gibbs, born March 29th, 1851, in Oxfordshire, England. Died July 4th, 1914, at Merivale. 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy House.'"

Near it is another brass plate inscribed: "To the glory of God. In loving memory of Mary Jane Margaret, wife of Isaac Gibbs, who departed this life March 31st 1898. For 20 years she took the deepest interest in the welfare of this Parish, and rendered ungrudging service in various branches of Church work. This tablet is erected by the members of St. Mary's Sewing Guild, Merivale."

One by one you find them on the walls of the church; simple brass plates recalling the people, the members of the Parish family, who have served God and the people, of Merivale so well through the long years.

You'll see Thomas Chamberlain Field, born 28th November, 1868, two years before the building and consecration of the old St. Mary's Church. He died on 15th December, 1921, having served as a church officer of the Parish for 20 years. His handsomely engraved tablet was erected, as it tells us, by his friends, as a mark of esteem; and it bears, as a text,

a verse containing a very essence of Christian Stewardship. "A good man leaveth his inheritance to his children's children. Proberbs 13:22."

On the south-east wall is a plate erected to the memory of another hard-working and faithful servant of the Parish of St. Mary, Merivale. "To the Glory of God," it reads, "in memory of Edwin Henry Staples Hamilton, died 26th October, 1964." It serves as a reminder that this good man served as a Vestryman in 1919, and as a Church warden from 1920 to 1950, with the additional duty of Synodsman from 1930-1957. Thirty-eight years!

Nearby is a plate in memory of John Gordon Leslie Vernon, who died 22nd September, 1947. He, it will be remembered, was the other Churchwarden with Mr. Hamilton when the new church was built and consecrated. He was Churchwarden of the Parish from 1920 to 1925, and again from 1936 to 1939. He served as Vestryman from 1928 to 1936, and from 1939 to 1947, when he died.

There are many more memorials to parishioners, and the names of others who have appeared in this history may be seen in many parts of the church, as may the names of those who have played smaller parts. The porch was given by the family of Robert Heaton Rhodes who was first Churchwarden elected after the Constitution of the Parish of Merivale in 1872.

The Vicar's stall was given in "loving memory of Ida Fryer."

Not all donated fittings and appointments are memorials, of course. Some mark the generosity of parishioners still living. There is, for example, the lovely Cloister, gift of H. E., L. M. and A. B. M. Otley, in November, 1965.

In June 1961 the present Parish Library was started by an anonymous donation of £100, and the Mothers' Union and Young Wives' libraries were incorporated with it. The Parish Library now stocks well over 1,000 titles, and is well patronised, some thirty to forty books going out at each meeting of Mothers' Union and Young Wives' alone. It is kept up-to-date by continual revision and additions of new titles as they become available or are donated.

Many of the furnishings from the old church were given away. When it was pulled down, the Nurses' Memorial Chapel at the Christchurch Public Hospital was being built, and some of the stained glass windows were given to it.

This came about because of the fact that the Hon. Secretary of the Hospital Lady Visitors' Association was one of the oldest residents in Merivale Parish. She had watched the building of the old St. Mary's church as a child.

She suggested that the "Agnus Dei" window from the Chancel of the old church be given to the Hospital Chapel, to be placed in its Chancel. The Vestry willingly gave permission, and offered any other windows which would fit into the architect's design for the Chapel. Three other coloured windows were chosen, and these now beautify and dignify the Hospital Chapel. The "Agnus Dei" window was given to St. Mary's by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Lane. The two side windows were presented to the church by Mrs. J. Studholme, and the rose window can be traced only to "An Old Parishioner." But it is fitting, somehow, and fully in keeping with the spirit which has animated the Parish, that windows from the original "House Built Upon a Rock" should continue to beautify another House of God.

A view of the present Vicarage from Church Lane.

St. Mary's, Merivale, interior
showing chancel and sanctuary.

. . . and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God

And now - what of the future? Prophesy is a gift and unless one is sure one possesses it, perhaps it is wiser not to attempt to imagine the future. Yet there are signs, though even these may be imperfectly read.

Merivale Parish has changed in more ways than one. In appearance alone, it has changed beyond recognition from the almost rural district in 1866. Houses have been built, roads paved, street lighting, footpaths, trees and shops have altered the face of the rather swampy land which was then so sparsely settled. It must be many years since sheep and cattle last saw green pastures, flax and infant trees and hedges growing on the Section.

The streets have seen the passing of the coaches and carriages, and the early motor vehicles. The trams have come and gone. The big, old homes which once stood in acres of garden, surrounded by fields, have watched their grounds shrink and neighbours moving in closer and closer.
And many of the families, generations of whom worked and worshipped in the old and new churches have moved away or died out; many of their homes, those big, gracious homes, have been divided and partitioned to make flats. Much of the wealth that once was made available to forward the work of St. Mary's has gone with the families who so generously gave of it.
Nowadays, and in complete contrast to the Merivale of past years, the Parish contains many more or less transient families; young people renting flats until they are able to build their own homes elsewhere; business executives whose careers will take them away to other centres; retired people selling old homes which are now too large for their needs, and building smaller homes in other partsof the city, or away from Christchurch altogether. Even industry is gradually tending to encroach a little, moving out from the centre of the city.

The Parish is doing its work well, providing not only for present needs but also for the future, and a feature of this careful stewardship is an imaginative scheme which is known as the Centennial Trust. This fund will be administered in such a way that the income from it will be used partly to meet needs outside the Parish, to reduce Parish debt arising from development and maintenance and for other purposes within the Parish.

This surely, is true stewardship, ensuring that what the Parish has today is improved as much as may be, and passed on to future generations. It is in complete accord with Operation Handshake and the other Outreach services and functions which have been a feature of St. Mary's, Merivale. It is all very wonderful to see, for it shows that in a world grown smaller, in an age when the definition of "neighbour" is broadening, in an era when old rifts are mending and old storms subsiding, in a time when the Universal Church is becoming a reality, the House built to the Glory of God in this Parish of St. Mary, Merivale, is still, and shows every sign of remaining, what its founders must have hoped that it would be - a lively, healthy, robust member of the body of Christ.

Vicars of St Mary's, Merivale

Reverend	F. Knowles	1872-1876
"	T. Flavell	1876-1891
"	C.J. Merton	1891-1896
"	H.L. Watson	1896-1902
Archdeacon	C.H. Gossett	1902-1915
"	P.B. Haggitt	1915-1934
"	A.K. Warren	1934-1940
"	A.J. Petrie	1940-1948
"	C.L. Mountfort	1948-1953
"	W.W. Averill	1953-1955
"	E.A. Gowing	1956-1960
"	S.E. Woods	1960

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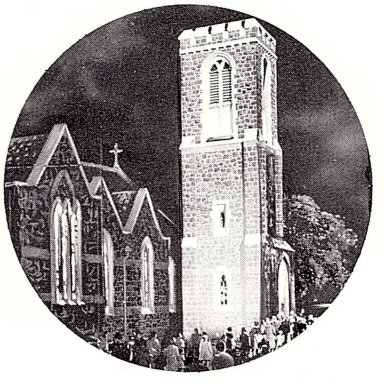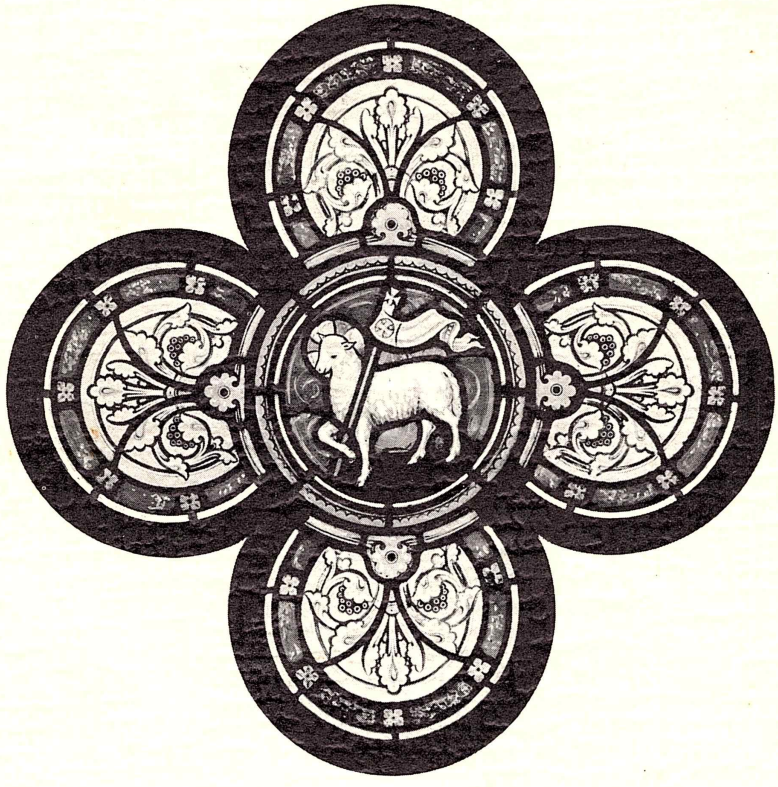
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